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SPECIAL NEEDS RECREATION INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES: AN EVALUATION

BY ©

MAUREEN P. KONRAD

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in

ADULT AND HIGHER EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT, CAREER & TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled SPECIAL NEEDS RECREATION INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES: AN EVALUATION submitted by MAUREEN P. KONRAD in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF EDUCATION.

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Date: April 14/93

ABSTRACT

This study presents the results of a program evaluation and traces factors that contributed to development of distance education courses in the Recreation and Leisure diploma at Kelsey Campus, SIAST, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The study was undertaken to assess program efficacy as perceived by the stakeholders involved in the distance education courses. An evaluation of the effectiveness of course development, implementation and outcomes could contribute to future program development. The Stake (1967) evaluation model was used to guide the study.

In the spring of 1992 data was gathered by questionnaire and interview from three stakeholder groups: students, administrative staff and instructors/tutors. The questionnaire gathered background information about participants, their reasons for participation, and satisfaction with resources and instructional materials. Seventy-one percent of the questionnaires were returned. Interviews were conducted with two administrators and three instructors who were involved in course development and delivery. The interviews collected data on course development and delivery, resources, and recommendations for change. Statistical procedures used to analyze quantitative data included frequencies of response and cross-tabulations. Qualitative data were analyzed for themes and pertinent documents were examined.

Results indicated that courses were developed in an independent study format to increase access to educational opportunities in Recreation and Leisure. Course development began as an independent project of the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program but evolved into a collaborative project with the added financial and administrative support of the Extension and Development Division of Kelsey Campus.

Although all stakeholder groups expressed satisfaction, each denoted unique concerns related to the independent study course design and delivery. Results revealed satisfaction with the resources and services provided, however, access to library resources and other student support services would enhance the learning experience. Students were generally satisfied with the quality of instructional materials, although recommended revisions to aspects of existing materials. Interview data from instructors and comments from student questionnaires provided evidence of students' desire to gain recognition or a certificate for the completion of courses. A major strength expressed by all stakeholders was the flexibility of independent study and its ability to reach rural learners.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Introduction

Distance education has been given considerable attention as an alternate mode of delivery of adult education programs. Distance education attempts to reach out to learners and to enable greater educational independence (Garrison & Shale, 1987). The emergence of new communication technologies has further expanded the potential of adult education to reach learners who previously have not had access to post-secondary education.

Print-based correspondence study is the oldest form of distance teaching and has provided a structure for many distance education methods utilized in higher education today. Garrison (1989) states that the print medium is very cost effective and correspondence study provides access for individuals unable to attend a regular classroom.

The literature indicates an important weakness of correspondence-based study. Correspondence study has a higher drop out rate than other modes of delivery. This may be partially explained by the failure of this mode of distance education to maintain sustained communication with the learner for the duration of the course. This weakness was examined by Thompson (1990) who studied the attitudes of students not well disposed to correspondence-based delivery. Results indicated a need to expand opportunities for interaction with the course instructor.

Distance education research has attempted to address the strengths and weaknesses of various modes of delivery. A 1986 review of the literature by McClelland and Saeed on distance education's use in vocational education revealed areas for future research consideration. The areas in which further research is needed included: effect of mode of distance delivery on learner outcomes, barriers in vocational education that may be overcome by distance delivery, and conditions and outcomes that justify costs of distance delivery (McCelland, 1986).

A review of research on the learner and learning in distance education signified that dropout or persistence of students enrolled in correspondence is the most frequently studied area. Cookson (1987) suggested that the examination of the adult learning process on outcomes in distance education also merits research attention. Thompson (1990) argues that further research should examine distance education developments that will make distance learning more appealing to a wide variety of learners.

In 1989, in recognition of the basic strengths of correspondence study, the Recreation and Leisure Diploma Program, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) began the development and delivery of print-based, distance education courses. The courses were developed in conjunction with the Extension and Development Division. In 1989 a training needs assessment was conducted with recreation activity staff employed in special care homes, hospitals and rehabilitation settings. The study identified print-based, self-directed study, and workshop format as the preferred modes for course delivery (Dill, 1989). The course content was based on the curriculum of the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program. To date the courses have been accessed on a part-time basis, primarily by recreation staff in health care settings. The learners reside in both rural and urban settings, and may not have previously participated in full-time post-secondary study in Recreation and Leisure. The courses of interest to these individuals have been in the Special Needs Recreation area. The 1989 Survey of the Training Needs of Activity Workers supported courses most applicable to their job duties.

Individual course evaluations have indicated general satisfaction with course content and mode of study. However, with respect to SIAST and Kelsey Campus, no formal comprehensive evaluation has identified the merits or weaknesses of the print-based distance education mode of delivery and the associated student support services.

Statement of Purpose

This research study was a systematic program evaluation of the distance education courses offered by the Recreation and Leisure diploma program, Kelsey Campus, SIAST, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The study was undertaken to identify program efficacy as perceived by the stakeholders involved in distance education courses. An evaluation and analysis of the independent study model could contribute to future course revisions, course development and delivery decisions. The information gathered from the study may enable learning needs of the adult students to be more adequately addressed in future course planning and delivery.

The Stake (1967) Evaluation model (cited in Worthen & Sanders, 1987) was used to guide the research study. The Stake model distinguishes between antecedent, transaction and outcome information. The evaluation study was designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To describe the origins of the special needs recreation distance education courses;
2. To describe the instructional design process of the distance education courses;
3. To describe the demographic characteristics of the students who have participated in courses; and
4. To describe the perceived initial outcomes of the distance education courses.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to address the study objectives.

The first set of questions relate to antecedent information.

1. What factors influenced the development of the current model utilized for the delivery of distance education courses?

2. What was the instructional design process/strategy utilized for the development and delivery of the correspondence courses?
3. What are the personal characteristics and backgrounds of the students participating in courses?
4. What are the reasons for participation in the distance education courses?

The second set of questions relate to transaction information.

1. To what extent is the administrative structure organized to sustain the delivery of print-based distance education?
2. To what extent are the administrative and academic staff aware of their roles and responsibilities with respect to the distance learners and courses?
3. To what degree have students experienced difficulty while taking an independent study course(s)?
4. Within the current model, what learner support services are utilized?
5. Within the current model, what additional support services would learners find beneficial?

The third set of questions relate to outcome information.

1. To what degree has the course(s) content applied to the learning needs of the students?
2. To what degree have students been satisfied with support resources and services?
3. To what degree have students been satisfied with instructor and peer contact?
4. To what degree are the students satisfied with the quality of instructional materials?
5. Would students recommend the Special Needs Recreation independent study course(s) to others?

6. To what extent do students intend to continue participating in the distance education courses in the Recreation and Leisure Diploma?
7. What do the stakeholders (students, administration, and instructors) perceive the major strengths and weaknesses of the correspondence mode of distance delivery to be?
8. What changes or additions would stakeholders make to improve the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses?

Assumptions of the Study

It is assumed that respondents answered evaluation questions honestly and as accurately as possible.

Significance

The delivery of distance education is relatively new to the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Kelsey Campus. Various forms of distance education have been utilized to provide campus courses and programs to locations throughout the province. Correspondence study is the oldest form of distance education, yet this mode of delivery is an innovation in the delivery of Recreation and Leisure diploma courses at Kelsey Campus, SIAST, Saskatoon.

A systematic evaluation of courses delivered in correspondence format has provided information about the efficacy of this approach. Future course planning and delivery may be enhanced from noting the experiences of students, administration and instructors. Outcome information lends insight into the current model and provides a basis for decision making.

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was limited by the perceptions of the limited number of students who have completed a correspondence course between March, 1990 and May, 1991. The study is also limited by the perceptions of course instructors and administrators who have been involved in the development and delivery of the correspondence courses. The study was also limited by the ability of stakeholders to accurately recall relevant information. Analysis of results was limited to the organizational context in which it they were collected.

This study was delimited to the evaluation of the distance education credit courses at SIAST, Kelsey Campus, in the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program. The results of the study may not apply to other distance education courses or the students of other distance education courses. Further, it is assumed that employers of students participating in distance education courses were not a key stakeholder group at the time of this study.

Definition of Terms

For clarity of usage, the following concepts have been defined.

Correspondence Education

A form of distance education that relies on postal delivery, of mainly written materials distributed from the system, written assignments from the learner, written comments and assessment from the tutor (UNESCO 1987).

Distance Education

Implies a process in which the majority of educational communication between the teacher and the student occurs noncontiguously, there is sustained two-way communication among teacher and students to support the learning process and utilizes technology to mediate this communication (Garrison and Shale, 1987).

Independent Study

Independent study is an overall term denoting a range of teaching-learning activities and is used to describe distance education programs at the higher education level (Keegan, 1986).

Stakeholders

Groups or individuals whose lives are affected by the programs and its evaluation (Weiss, 1984). These would include program and extension staff, course instructors, and students who have completed one or more courses.

Organization of Thesis

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The introductory chapter includes the information presented thus far. Chapter 2 outlines a review of the literature. The research methodology and instrumentation are described in Chapter 3 of the thesis. Chapter 4 describes the results of data analysis. A summary of findings, discussion and recommendations for further research and program development are presented in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to post-secondary distance education. The purpose of the review is to provide a framework for an evaluation research project. Discussion will focus on the following areas: an overview of distance education, correspondence and independent study, distance education in post-secondary or vocational education settings, adult learners and program quality in distance education.

An Overview of Distance Education

In the last decade distance education has experienced growth as an alternative mode of learning for adults (Garrison & Shale, 1987). Educational organizations continue to utilize correspondence study and technological innovations to facilitate learning at a distance. Distance education research has focused on specific elements of distance education. To date, the literature and research on distance education has reported on the effects of different delivery methods, participation, barriers, student outcomes, student profiles, and institutional factors (Cookson, 1989; McClelland & Saeed, 1986).

In addition to the above research topics, distance education literature has attempted to describe the field, its boundaries and foundations. Technological developments have challenged the traditional definition of distance education and the scope of the field. Garrison and Shale (1987) suggest that distance education requires analysis to understand its potential, limitations and role in the larger field of adult education.

In 1986 Keegan (cited in Rumble, 1986) initiated discussion on the boundaries of field with a review of distance education definitions. He reviewed various definitions and proposed one with six essential elements. Moore also developed a broad definition of distance education. The 1986 definition proposed by Keegan and the 1973 definition by Moore (cited in

Veduin & ClarK, 1991) are comprehensive and identify the common dimensions of distance education. The two most common characteristics in a definition of distance education are: a form of separation of the teacher and the learner and influence in the planning from an educational organization (Holmberg, 1986). Moore's 1973 theory cited in Verduin (1991) states that it is the separation of teacher and learner that makes media necessary in distance education. In a 1989 Rumble analyzed the 1986 definition advocated by Keegan. The following points are the elements of the comprehensive definition as presented by Keegan.

> The quasi-permanent separation of the teacher throughout the length of the learning process.
>
> The influence of an educational organization both in the planning and preparation of learning materials and also in the provision of student support services distinguishes it from private study and teach yourself programs.
>
> The use of technical media, print, audio, video, computer, to unite teacher and learner and carry the content of the course.
>
> The provision of two-way communication so that the student may benefit from or initiate dialogue.
>
> The quasi-permanent absence of the learning group throughout the length of the learning process, so that people are usually taught as individuals and not in groups, with the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes (p.10).

The Keegan definition is widely accepted by different types of educational organizations. Saskatchewan Education (1991) supports the elements evident in the Keegan definition, however, they adopted a 1985 definition of the Colleges, Institutes and University Extension Committee (CIUE). This definition incorporates four of the elements of the Keegan definition. The first element parallel to the Keegan definition is the concept of learner and instructor separation by distance. The second element is the opportunity for interaction between teacher and learner. Independent study is the third aspect, although the CIUE definition also considers group activities as a component of their definition. Frequent use of technologies for communication is the fourth analogous element. The CIUE definition indicates that the traditional modes of correspondence or independent study should not be overlooked and thus are included as components of their definition.

A further distinction between distance learning and distance education has been suggested by Norenburg and Lundblad (1987). He indicates that distance education in its broadest definition is "education that is characterized by the separation of the learner(s) and the instructor with the interactive phase of teaching being conducted through print media" (p. 2). Alternatively, distance learning is described as the technological means of delivering the instruction. However, Norenburg proposes that the terms are often used interchangeably.

The use of communication technology to enable dialogue between learner and tutor prompted the expanded definition of distance education. Distance education institutions whether public or private can be identified by their use of technical media as the basis for the learning materials that are prepared for students (Keegan, 1980). A distance delivery typology was developed by Scales in 1983 and is cited in Norenburg and Lundblad (1987). This typology has six classifications of technology and delivery modes. This model provides a continuum of types of interactivity and learner self-sufficiency.

Keegan (1980) distinguishes the modes of delivery and identifies the most common forms utilized by education institutions as, print-based, audio-based, video-based or computer-based. Print-based delivery utilizes printed materials and is commonly known as correspondence study.

In the Foundations of Distance Education (1986), Desmond Keegan formulates and describes three groupings of theoretical approaches to distance education. Keegan states the most important position in the 1960's to 1970's included theories of autonomy and independence. Major proponents of these theories include Rudolf M. Delling, Charles A. Wedemeyer and Micheal G. Moore. The second theory cited by Keegan is the theory of industrialization. This theory is teaching based on objective, rational and technically produced interaction (Keegan, 1986). The main proponent, Otto Peters, formulated the theory in the 1970's. The third theoretical grouping is represented by the contemporary theory of interaction and communication and is supported by Borje Holmberg, John A. Baath, David Sewart, Kevin C. Smith and John S. Daniel (Keegan, 1986). Keegan presents these groupings in order to review the major theoretical approaches developed to date and then proposes a new theoretical structure. The structure advocated by Keegan (1986) attempts to re-integrate the teaching arts into distance education. A system that re-constructs the teaching and learning interaction has been suggested by Keegan. Further description and discussion of the elements of his theoretical framework are provided in the program quality section.

Correspondence and Independent Study

Keegan (1980) indicates that the majority of distance education programs are print-based and it is the oldest form of course delivery. It has served many learners well over time and as Keegan advocates, enables the greatest degree of learner self-sufficiency. Another strength of correspondence study is that it continues to be the most cost effective form of distance education today (Garrison and Shale, 1987). Moore (1987) states that the Open University offers 80% print- based media, 10% broadcasting (ie. radio, television) and 10% by face to face seminars.

Moore (1987) states that the most common form of design of printed materials is the author-editor model. This design contracts a content or subject expert, usually a professor or instructor, to write the course. It is then edited and compiled by a design specialist who is usually a staff member within an extension or independent study department. The content or subject of the course should dictate the course design. Moore recommends that in the development of the course or the study guide the designer must carefully clarify expectations of the course, explain what is important and why. According to Moore (1987) other forms of media are more effective when supplemented, or organized around a printed text or study guide.

Kaufman (1989) classifies correspondence education as first generation course design and indicated that it has served as the main model of distance education for many years. However, Kaufman argues this approach alone fails to provide learner control or the opportunity for dialogue, and has little emphasis on the development of thinking skills.

Thompson (1990) reported results of a study of the attitudes of post-secondary students who had never participated in correspondence-based education. Previous studies have investigated the attitudes of students who have enrolled in correspondence-based distance education; however, the Thompson study was the first to examine the attitudes of those students who are not well disposed to that method of course delivery. The first question addressed the major disadvantages associated with correspondence study. The second question ascertained the instructional strategies students regarded as most important in correspondence study. Thompson states that the study contains little new information for distance educators. However, it does provide valuable verification of the need for increased interaction between students and instructor in correspondence education. Correspondence study continues to be a very common format for the delivery of distance education. Therefore, the Thompson study has important implications for distance education agencies employing this format.

Adult Learners

A portion of distance education research has studied the nature of and the characteristics of adult learners. Garrison (1989) cites Moore's 1985 view that suggests the "majority of distance education is concerned with meeting the needs of adults" (p. 103). Garrison argues that common elements of distance education and adult education have not been fully explored. He suggests that distance educators have not integrated the adult education literature and adult educators have not incorporated distance delivery methods. Keegan reaffirms Moore's views cited in Garrison (1989) and states

> That distance educators become aware of the assumptions and principles of adult education; principles that are essential to effective and worthwhile communication during various phases of the educational transaction (p. 104).

Therefore, it is important to the planning and delivery of adult distance education courses that the designers and facilitators understand the characteristics of adults as distance learners.

The participation of adults in distance education has been traced world-wide. Large institutions maintain profile statistics of their distance learners. Moore (1987) states that in Britain one in three students is more than 44 years of age, in Canada, 60% are female and in all countries the majority are employed. In Canada the stereotype of a distance learner is an employed female in her mid-twenties or older, living in a rural or remote area, who cannot attend on-campus classes and may be taking courses at home or in the workplace (Helm, 1989). This profile was replicated in a 1991 study of learners enrolled in televised college courses in Saskatchewan. The survey developed a profile of participants in the televised courses and described them as

> Predominantly female (90%), married (77%) with dependents living at home. They have some post-secondary education (60%) and are active in the labour force (either full-time 50% or part-time 33%) predominantly in the service sector. Very few (17%) of the students reside in the largest urban centres (greater than 10,000). This illustrates that distance education is meeting the objective of increased access to learning by rural residents with 44% of students residing in villages, hamlets or on farms (SIAST, 1992, p. 33-34).

Moore (1986) characterizes the distance learner as self-directed and has drawn a relationship between self-directed learning and distance education. According to Moore, it has been argued that because "adults have a self concept characterized by independence, they are capable of self direction and are generally willing and capable to be self-directed in their learning" (p. 12). Moore further reports that the adult learner is aware of his own standards and expectations.

Misanchuk (1989) identified relationships between distance learning and the adult learner. These characteristics or conditions need to be recognized in the planning and delivery phases of distance courses. First, there is no face to face contact with the instructor. The implication of this is that they can't ask the instructor questions easily, they may lack cues about expectations and can't demonstrate their competence easily. Second, a feeling of isolation may result from no contact with other students. The third element is that adult learners are most likely to be combining study with job or family responsibilities and have to work their studies around irregular schedules. Fourth, they may lack access to library or other learning resources. The final element is that the adult learner may be unaccustomed to the role of a student, but are highly motivated to learn.

Knapper (1985) supports the last point and adds that adult distance students must be able to take responsibility for guiding their studies. He further explains, "most distance students are already successful lifelong learners, but have not recognized this fact" (p. 70).

Baath (1983) presents some additional considerations about adult distance learners that course developers should be aware. Adult learners have more self control to study, but less time to set aside for study. Learning activities need to be felt to have immediate meaning and new learning must be set into the experience of both life and work. He indicates that adults learning at a distance lack peer group support and that it is difficult to maintain an individual's confidence. These points lend insight into why the drop out rate is higher for distance education courses. Baath (1983) indicates that "internal motivation is a necessary precondition in distance education" (p. 275). It can be concluded that recognition of adult learner needs and characteristics are fundamental to the design and delivery of distance education.

Post-Secondary and Vocational Distance Education

Distance learning has a long history in Canada and can be traced back before Confederation. Thirteen years after Confederation, Queen's University in Kingston had established an Extension department to serve students studying off-campus (Helm, 1989). Substantial growth in distance education has been noted in Canada since 1970's. During this time three post-secondary institutions dedicated exclusively to developing and delivering distance education were established. These institutions include; Athabasca University in Alberta, the Open Learning Institute in British Columbia and la Tele-universite in Quebec. Their recent contributions have added significantly to the advances made by older dual-mode institutions such as Queen's University and the University of Saskatchewan. Since early developments in distance education, both federal and provincial governments have made efforts to reach remote areas of the country with communication systems. Many projects have pioneered new technologies in an effort to increase access to education (Helm, 1989).

John Daniel from the preface to "Distance Education in Canada" (1986) cited in Saskatchewan Education (1991) indicates the primary motivation behind development of distance education at Canadian universities as the desire to create innovative delivery learning systems. Increasing access to education was the second factor cited by Daniel. Ross Paul (1989) in the Forward to "Post-Secondary Distance Education in Canada", cited in Saskatchewan Education (1991) acknowledges that "more and more frequently governments and other agencies are turning to distance learning systems to increase accessibility to post-secondary education" (p. 2).

According to Helm (1989) Canadians enroll in distance learning courses for similar reasons as do citizens of other countries. Usually off-campus study is the only option available for individuals faced with barriers such as geographic separation, limited seats or family responsibilities. Helm (1989) reports results of a 1985-86 survey by the Department of Communications that was conducted to determine the level of distance learning using communication technologies in Canada. The study reported the majority of distance learning courses were either professional or continuing education. The second most common program level was undergraduate, followed by vocational/technical courses (Helm, 1989). The profile of Canadian institutions offering distance courses is usually "dual-mode" -- meaning they offer both on-campus classroom instruction and off-campus distance instruction. The dual-mode institution is typically a university or college, followed by community colleges or technical institutes (Helm, 1989).

In 1982 Keegan and Rumble, cited in Keegan (1986) developed a classification system for institutions at the post-secondary level. Keegan and Rumble classify distance teaching universities, such as Athabasca University, as autonomous institutions. The second classification, mixed institutions, are similar in character to the dual-mode institution described by Helm. Keegan's system further classifies the mixed institution. He describes a group 3 organization as an independent study division of an Extension department at a college or university (Keegan, 1986). According to Keegan (1986) this organization is common among Extension colleges of both American and

Canadian universities, with twenty independent study departments existing in Canada in the early 1980s. Similarly, Helm (1989) indicates that in most dual-mode institutions responsibility for managing distance learning activities is often assigned to a central office, usually within a continuing education or a community extension department. She states further that the enrollment and course duration are scheduled at the convenience of faculty and the institution.

Canadian community colleges have been challenged to provide comprehensive post-secondary education, including distance delivery. The college system was created and grew extensively between 1960 and 1975 (Dennison, 1986). Upon examination of the colleges in Canada, Dennison (1986) notes that they vary in their descriptive title, mandate, curricular design and government structure. He states further that Colleges recognized that to meet the educational needs of a segment of society faced with time and distance barriers, alternative programming was necessary. This implied a focus on distance education as a method of program delivery. However, for many colleges the high costs of producing distance education material and delivery issues can conflict with a limited mandate. Dennison (1986) indicates that despite problems, community colleges in Canada are implementing distance education strategies that do not conflict with their mandate or resources. In an effort to make distance delivery a reality, colleges are entering into cooperative endeavours with industry or other institutions (Dennison, 1986). Dennison concludes, creative formats, cooperative planning, and sophisticated technologies will reflect distance education at Canadian community colleges now and in the future.

Parallel to the community college, the potential value of distance education has been recognized by vocational education. Everett and Pershing (1989) propose that some elements of vocational education would require adaptation for distance delivery. They approach the issue by interfacing the domains of learning with vocational education. They suggest that in the cognitive domain distance education is at least as effective as other forms of teaching and learning. Assistive technologies can supplement other formats to enable psycho-motor skills to be taught through distance education. Further, Everett and Pershing argue that the affective domain presents special problems in any educational setting. They conclude that well-designed materials and an organized program will help maintain a positive attitude of the adult distance learner. Everett and Pershing (1989) view vocational education as a setting of innovation and an appropriate setting for the application of distance education technology as it exists today. They cite examples of U.S. states which have shown initiative to overcome "time, distance, age and socio-economic barriers that often deprive citizens of knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for today's work force" (p. 36). They note that as small institutions, vocational settings can be more responsive, flexible, creative and adaptive than larger institutions.

As implied by the literature, distance education is an important activity of many provincial education departments, universities, community colleges and vocational/technical institutes.

Saskatchewan Education recently reviewed the status and future of distance education in the province and produced a discussion paper to obtain feedback. The discussion paper was collaboratively developed by Saskatchewan Education (Sask. Ed.) and the Distance Education Review Committee. The discussion document was the first stage of a long term planning process for the province's distance education system (Sask. Ed. 1991).

The discussion paper reviews the history of distance education and outlines the current policy issues. It defined the issues as; student accessibility, program quality, measure of success, course design, and student support services. The paper concludes with an overview of the current Saskatchewan perspective and funding issues. In addition to topics the mentioned, attention was given to reviewing Saskatchewan based distance education research concerned with program quality and technologies.

The first study cited by Saskatchewan Education occurred during the experimental years of distance televised courses. Burgess and Keston (1984) conducted a system evaluation of the first televised course at the University of Regina. Their main recommendation was to improve aspects of course design. This included a better telephone system for more immediate instructor/student interaction, and a student orientation process to increase students' comfort with the technologies. They further suggested that student support services should "reduce turnaround time, ensure adequate learning support resources and build opportunities for increasing instructor/student interaction" (Sask. Ed., 1991, p. 14).

The second study cited by Saskatchewan Education (1991) was conducted by Wong (1989) at the University of Saskatchewan. The study was conducted with students participating in televised courses. Wong (1989) concluded that no significant differences were noted in student grades when compared to on-campus counterparts. The study also stated that the completion rates for the televised courses were very high, ranging 85.5% to 87.1% (Sask. Ed., 1991).

The third study cited by Saskatchewan Education was completed in 1988 by Dunleavy. This study addressed "the design of an effective learning support system for Saskatchewan adult learners" (p. 15). The study maintained that similarities exist between rural and urban learners, but geographic location was a significant barrier facing rural learners. He argued that distance education is only a partial solution to access barriers, due in part to the requirement of a student support system for effective distance delivery. Dunleavey noted that this element is often absent in rural centres (Sask. Ed.,1991).

The discussion paper, "Distance Education in Saskatchewan", highlights the development of satellite technology for distance delivery. In 1989 the Saskatchewan Communication Network (SCN) began distributing its narrowcast signal to 35 locations in the province. The SCN centres are managed by the Regional Colleges or Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology Campuses (SIAST). In 1990 services expanded to include 51 centres throughout the province. The SCN infrastructure enables instructor and student contact through one-way video and two-way audio signal (Sask. Ed., 1991).

As a partner in the SCN delivery network, the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) was interested in analyzing and evaluating the televised courses it offered. In April of 1991, the SIAST Distance Education Committee conducted an evaluation of televised courses delivered during the fall term of 1991. The draft report "Distance Education Evaluation -- SCN Courses, Fall, 1991" states the systematic study was conducted in response to a Distance Education Program Review Committee recommendation. It was recommended that SIAST and universities "continue to evaluate on an ongoing basis, courses developed for distance delivery in order to ensure quality and effectiveness" (p. 1). The survey provided a profile of the SIAST distance education student and their level of satisfaction with the learning experience. Results are to provide a foundation for future data collection and evaluation efforts.

The study reported that students are generally satisfied with the logistical course arrangements and are likely motivated by the desire to complete a diploma or certificate. Results indicated the need to improve the interactive components of courses and ensure relevancy for the student (p. 32). The study concluded that respondents were satisfied with courses overall, although there was some variation with individual courses.

Program Quality

Program quality is a complex issue, discussed from different perspectives in the distance education literature. This section presents the salient factors related to quality in distance education programs. According to George, 1987, and cited in Verduin (1991), education quality is not a well-defined concept nor are the elements of how to assess it precise, therefore creating a dilemma for education.

Saskatchewan Education (1991) addressed the issue of program quality from three points of view. They include measures of student success, course design and support services. Similarly, Kelly (1991) addressed three topics essential to course creation in distance eduction. Kelly described the important elements associated with planning, course preparation and support systems for learners.

In 1991, Verduin summarized the literature related to the assessment of program quality and effectiveness of distance education. Verduin utilized a schema developed by Gooler in 1979, whose model is adopted widely for the assessment of distance eduction. The Gooler criteria, cited in Verduin (1991) include: learner outcomes; which includes the development of cognitive, psycho-motor, and affective skills and learner retention or dropout rate; access; quality; effectiveness and efficiency; impact; relevance of knowledge; and generation of knowledge. Based on the writings of Holmberg (1986), Verduin (1991) added an element called acceptability and states that it includes "the status or recognition afforded learning based on perceptions of its quality" (p. 113).

An alternative perspective proposed by Sork and Reed (1991) identifies the ethical considerations in distance education that typically represent generic activities required to offer formal educational opportunities. The clusters include: admission, intake and retention of students, course development and presentation, program and course marketing and administration, learner and facilitator interaction and program course and learner evaluation. Increasing awareness of ethical issues among distance education professionals is the purpose of the Sork and Reed schema and these issues can be considered aspects of program quality.

In 1982 Keegan and Rumble, cited in Verduin (1991), present specific criteria to measure quality in distance eduction. These criteria include quality learning materials, suitability of distance education subject taught, provision of education versus instruction, and the intersubjectivity of learning at a distance. These elements reflect components of a new theoretical framework advocated by Keegan. He proposed that the intersubjectivity of learning is based on shared experiences between teacher and learner, and the opportunity for meaningful dialogue. Keegan suggests that interpersonal communication is paramount to the teaching-learning process, therefore advocates that this interaction must be artificially re-constructed in distance learning. Keegan states the re-integration of the teaching act occurs in two ways. First, in the development of interactive learning materials and second, in providing a system for communication and dialogue with the learner.

The distance education literature has not adopted one paradigm to assess quality in programs and courses, although key components are evident. The three points of view outlined by Saskatchewan Education (1991) will serve as a framework for discussing the literature associated with distance education program quality.

Measures of Student Success

Coldeway (1986) contends educational institutions have difficulty in defining success; therefore it is not a problem unique to distance education. Coldeway suggests that success is as much a measure of the values and attitudes of those doing the questioning, as it is a function of existing standards of educational excellence. Coldeway discusses several standards of success and emphasizes that a universal definition of success is unlikely. Coldeway presents three groups of indicators. The first group of measures focus on the student, the second on institutional factors and the third involves elements of innovative education.

Examples of student factors are:

1. student achievement measures (for example, course grades);
2. overall level of achievement within a program (for example, overall grade point average);
3. percentage of the total student enrollment completing a program;
4. student satisfaction with the course or program;
5. follow-up measures of student success (for example, getting jobs); and
6. cost measures.

The second set of measures focus on institutional elements and include:

1. range of offerings at an institution;
2. availability of unique or innovative offerings;
3. alternative methods and times of delivery; and
4. availability of other services (for example, student counselling).

The third set of elements involve innovative education and are:

1. reaching previously disadvantaged groups;
2. giving people an opportunity to enroll who otherwise would not have had the opportunity (for example, open admissions policies);
3. innovative grading systems;
4. providing interdisciplinary courses and programs; and
5. giving credit for previous and life experience.

Coldeway advocates that defining indicators of success is the first step in appraising quality. Individual institutions need to establish indicators that are pertinent to the assessment of quality in distance education courses or programs.

Course Design

There is a wealth of literature focused on course design in distance education. Therefore, this section is limited to literature pertinent to assessing quality in print-based or correspondence programs. Like measures of student success, identifying factors associated with quality in course or program design is a difficult task. Seaborne and Zuckernick (1986) refer to course design as the process of producing instructional materials.

In Canada an important element of course design is the course team. Seaborne and Zuckernick (1986) report that most Canadian institutions employed similar steps in course design based on the fundamental components of curriculum planning and design. They further suggest that the emphasis and support for course development is a key indicator of an institution's commitment to distance education.

In many Canadian and international institutions, print-based materials are used as the primary media or are used in support of a multi-media approach. Norenburg and Lundblad (1987) state that materials for distance education need to be "consciously and systematically designed, keeping in mind the delivery system to be used" (p. 7). He advocates that printed materials play a central role in distance education.

Bates (1989) critiques the Canadian distance education system for relying heavily on print-based materials. Bates suggests that in Canada efforts to increase effectiveness in distance teaching have not effectively integrated communication technologies.

There are numerous references identifying key elements for design and delivery of print-based distance learning materials, each focused on a specific idealogy (Baath, 1983; Haag, 1990; Holmberg, 1986; Keegan, 1986; Jorgensen, 1986). Keegan's (1986) theoretical framework has implications for print-based course design. He outlines the design elements learning materials should incorporate as: easily readable style, anticipation of students problems', careful structuring of content, self-testing questions, instructional objectives, and inserted questions. He further notes that when courses are presented they should utilize communication by correspondence, telephone tutorials, computer conferences or teleconferences and comments on assignments by tutors.

Kaufman's (1989) theory of course design offers an alternative paradigm. He identifies three characteristics of course design and based on these elements, distinguishes three generations of distance education delivery. Kaufman states that the characteristics of learner control, dialogue, and development of thinking skills, differentiate the generations of design in distance education.

Kaufman describes control by the learner as the "opportunity and ability to influence, direct, and determine decisions related to the educational process" (p. 60). This characteristic is founded on the major dimensions of; independence, power, and support. Independence in distance education is defined as the freedom to make choices. Examples include the freedom to select learning objectives, activities, and methods of evaluation (p. 61). Power and support are described by Garrison and Baynton, 1987 and cited in Kaufman (1989). Power is "the ability or capacity of the learner to take part in and assume responsibility for the learning process" (p. 63). The final dimension, support, refers "to the resources that the learner can gain access to in order to conduct the learning process" (p. 63).

Dialogue is the second major characteristic of course design. Kaufman (1989) cites Moore, 1983 and refers to "dialogue" as the degree to which interaction/communication is possible between the teacher and learner (p. 64). This characteristic is cited by several authors as an important element in distance education theory (Keegan, 1986; Moore, 1986).

The third characteristic of distance education course design is the development of thinking skills. Kaufman states that thinking skills are important tools for a rapidly changing society. According to Kaufman (1989), third generation course design, with a major emphasis on the development of thinking skills, can only be achieved through computer-mediated distance education.

Traditional correspondence education is called first generation course design. In this design, Kaufman (1989) contends that the learner has no choice in the program, or power. First generation design is characterized by limited support during the learning process other than written comments on assignments, with an exam serving as the main mode of evaluation. Dialogue is limited with this design, with some interaction occurring via the telephone or postal service. Finally, according to Kaufman, first generation design has little or no emphasis on the development of thinking skills and the focus is content coverage.

Student Support Services

Support service "refers to any structure that provides any type of assistance in learning, either human support or from physical resources, to learners involved in distance education courses" (Conrad, 1991). Thompson (1989) states there is a rapidly increasing body of literature on the provision of support services to students in distance education programs. Support services and the opportunity to connect with fellow participants is a recognized need for students and is cited frequently in the distance education literature. (Conrad, 1991; Kelly, 1991; Kirkup and von Plummer, 1990; McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986; Thompson, 1989). Support services include a wide range of activities, especially in distance education. According to McInnis-Rankin and Brindley (1986) services include admissions, registration, records, examinations, information services, advising, counselling, tutoring/instructional support and student advocacy.

Support services in Canadian distance education institutions were studied by McInnis-Rankin and Brindley in 1986. They reported that the provision of support varies with institution. Collaborative arrangements exist between some institutions in order to share delivery of student support services. They concluded that an increasing use of technology to deliver services will be the trend in distance education. McInnis-Rankin and Brindley recognized that many technologies were already in use at the time of their study.

Thompson (1989) recognizes the value of quality support services; however, he cites research of correspondence programs that indicate not all distance learners access services or desire contact with the instructor or tutor. Studies of correspondence programs suggest independence and autonomy characterize distance learners; therefore, they may prefer limited interaction with instructors or fellow students. Diverse student needs and interests call for different levels of instructional support according to Thompson, who concludes that if a broader range of students are to be attracted to distance education, enhancement of student services is required. Distance education must do more than deliver a set of instructional materials to increase accessibility to education; adequate student support is a service that should also exist (Thompson, 1989).

Interacting with fellow students has been studied as an aspect of support services. Research assessing the needs of female distance education students concluded that women have different needs for local support during their distance studies. Kirkup and von Plummer (1990) reported that women value the chance to interact with other students more than men. The authors argue for the provision of distance education support services suitable to the needs of women. They recommend distance education systems that create a network of support among students and the opportunity to meet (Kirkup & von Plummer, 1990).

Ongoing support for learners in distance education has been significantly influenced by communication technology. Kelly (1991) reports that varied uses of communication exist in distance teaching. Such developments include the use of facsimile transmission, audio, video and computer teleconferencing for faster one-way communication and the possibility of interactive two-way communication. Technological benefits for student support include faster submission and return of assignments, handling administrative or academic inquiries from students, allowing access to library resources and indexes, and personal counselling (Kelly, 1991).

In 1990 Shklanka reviewed off-campus library service as an aspect of student support. According to Shklanka (1990) distance education quality is influenced by the quality of interaction between the instructor and student and the quality of support services for students and instructors. He emphasizes the growing importance of library support service for students studying at a distance. Shklanka concludes that library services require improved marketing and library staff need more involvement in the course development process.

Summary

The chapter purpose was to review the literature related to post-secondary distance education and to provide a framework for the evaluation of a distance education program. The five areas reviewed were an overview of distance education, correspondence and independent study, adult learners, post-secondary distance education and program quality.

A comprehensive definition of distance education and the distinctions between distance learning and distance education provided a brief introduction to the field. Classification schemas of distance education delivery are cited, specifically those developed by Scales (1983) and Garrison (1985). Keegan's three groupings of theoretical approaches were outlined, along with the identification of theory proponents.

A historical overview of correspondence study preceded discussion of its current status. The literature indicates that correspondence study continues to be a very common format for the delivery of distance education.

The needs and characteristics of adult distance learners were discussed along with learner profiles and participation rates. Garrison contends that the distance education and adult education research have not fully explored their common elements, nor attempted to integrate the literature. Key considerations for planning distance education for adult learners were addressed.

A brief history of distance education at Canadian institutions was provided. The major system for classifying distance learning institutions was discussed, making a distinction between autonomous and mixed or dual-mode institutions. The issues related to distance education for different types of institutions were identified.

A Saskatchewan Education Discussion paper on distance education was examined. This paper reviewed recent studies, including an evaluation of televised courses, the development of an effective delivery system, the growth of the Saskatchewan Communication Network (SCN) for satellite delivery, and a recent study by SIAST that reported outcomes of SCN courses offered in the fall of 1991.

The final section of the literature review outlined the salient components of program quality and its assessment. Distance education literature has distinguished factors or criteria associated with program quality and suggest that quality can be a difficult concept for an educational organization to measure. An outline cited by Saskatchewan Education (1991) was used to distinguish the elements of quality distance education. This outline subdivides program quality into; measures of success, course design and student support services.

The elements of program quality are elaborated in the final section of the literature review. Coldeway concluded that measures of success are difficult to distinguish and the development of universal criteria to assess success is unlikely. He maintained that assessment procedures must begin with the identification of the elements of success in a distance education course or program. Examples of these elements are provided in the discussion. Design research was introduced by the theoretical framework advocated by Keegan (1986) which included elements of a quality print-based course. The third generation course design theory, proposed by Kaufman, was summarized. The usage of student support services, which are fundamental to distance delivery were discussed.

The literature suggests that print-based delivery is the foundation for distance education in many Canadian post-secondary institutions. Distance education is continuing to grow in response to diverse student needs and characteristics, and enabling increased access to a variety of educational and training opportunities. The sole use of traditional print-based distance education is inadequate to ensure student success and meet all the elements of a quality program. Institutions engaged in post-secondary distance delivery must ensure adequate resources are available to effectively incorporate the needs of distance learners and for the provision of support services. The fundamental elements of quality should be incorporated into the design and delivery of all modes of distance education, especially print-based, where the opportunity for interaction and the development of thinking skills are limited.

Additional research that assesses the elements of quality in distance education is required. New distance education courses and programs should be evaluated both formatively, and summatively as to their merits and deficiencies, in order to increase the effectiveness of the design and course delivery process.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains research design and methodology. Included are a description of the population, an outline of the conceptual framework for data collection and analysis and a complete description of data sources and methods of presentation.

Population Sample

The study sample was all students who participated in one or more Special Needs Recreation distance education courses between March, 1990 and May, 1991. These courses have been offered in an independent study format since January 1990 at Kelsey Campus, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Saskatoon. The study surveyed all students who completed a course and therefore the population size was similar to the sample size. A second data source included three of the four course instructors(tutors) and the two administrative staff who have been involved in course development and delivery. A structured interview format was used to obtain input from this stakeholder group.

Conceptual Framework for Data Collection and Analysis

Stake's (1967) approach to evaluation provided the conceptual framework for the collection and analysis of data for the study. The Stake model applies to a variety of evaluation contexts (Brack & Moss, 1984). The benefits of evaluation generally are that it accounts for the concerns and reactions of audiences with a vested interest in the program (Brack & Moss, 1984). According to Stake (1983) the evaluation of educational programs is focused on describing program activities rather than intents. The Stake (1967) has attributes which make it an appropriate model for this evaluation. The purpose of the study was to trace program development, activities and identify initial outcomes. The applicable components of the Stake (1967) model will be described.

The Stake evaluation model provides a framework to describe programs or curriculum. Stake (1973) indicates that the objectives of program evaluation are description and judgement. Three bodies of information form the horizontal dimension of the Stake model. These bodies of information are collected for evaluations that propose to describe or make judgements. These data matrices include antecedent, transaction, and outcome information and provide the basis for the design of this study.

Antecedent information describes the factors that lead to course development. Transactions are dynamic factors and describe how the program was implemented and its content. The third component of the model is outcome information. The perceived outcomes of the course experience as described by stakeholders will be the primary data source for describing satisfaction and course effectiveness.

The description and judgement matrices are vertical dimensions of the Stake (1967) model. Standards and judgements are the components of the judgement matrix. The elements of a quality correspondence course as described in the literature review will serve as standards to base discussion of program efficacy. A discussion of program efficacy and recommendations for program development are provided in the final chapter of this thesis.

Data Collection Techniques

Data contributing to antecedent, transaction and outcome information were collected. A research instrument was distributed to all students who have completed one or more Special Needs correspondence courses. A structured interview schedule, utilizing open-ended questions from the survey instrument and the research questions applicable to program development, was constructed. Face to face interviews were conducted with two administrators and two course instructors/tutors in June, 1992. One instructor was not available at the time of interviewing; therefore she provided a written response to the interview questions. Each interview was tape recorded with the permission of the interviewee. They were informed that participation was voluntary, and that interview data were confidential. Participants were informed that the interview tapes would be discarded once analysis was complete. The interviewer indicated that they could withdraw from the interview at any time or ask for clarification to questions. All written responses to interview questions were recorded on an interview schedule. The taped interviews were used to ensure accuracy of written responses and quotations.

Permission was granted by Kelsey Campus to release the names and addresses of students, and to analyze course documents (see Appendix A). The survey instrument was distributed through the mail at the end of May, 1992. To enable ease of return, respondents were provided a stamped self-addressed reply envelope. It was requested that the questionnaire be returned as soon as possible. A reminder letter was sent out two weeks after the initial mail out.

Respondent Anonymity

Respondent anonymity was maintained throughout the research study. Respondents were requested not to put their name anywhere on the returned instrument. A letter accompanying the instrument outlined the purpose of the research project and the function of the collected data (see Appendix B). The letter indicated that all responses would be anonymous and participation in the study was voluntary. Each student was assigned an identification number for follow-up purposes only. The respondent's identification number was for the sole use of the primary researcher and this information was not disclosed. Respondent identification numbers were destroyed prior to data analysis.

The written and recorded interview responses were for the sole use of the primary researcher and remained confidential. Interviewee names and specific statements made by interviewees at the time of the study have not been disclosed.

Questionnaire Design and Pilot testing

The evaluation questionnaire for the student respondents was developed based on the research sub-questions and guided by the Stake evaluation model. A single instrument was designed to assess background and demographic information, the student experience and level of satisfaction. The questionnaire was divided into three major sections (see Appendix C). These sections are described as follows:

1. **Section One** of the instrument provided antecedent information. Questions focused on personal characteristics and background information of respondents.
2. **Section Two** of the instrument addressed the student's experience with the course support services and resources.
3. **Section Three** provided outcome information. The focus of questions was an assessment of general course quality and satisfaction with instructional materials. A general comments section was used to identify course strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement.

The instrument utilized closed response questions with pre-provided answers. Multiple choice, checklists and four point Likert scales, with a not applicable category, were the response formats used. The scale for questionnaire items 14 - 21 was (0) not applicable, (1) dissatisfied, (2) somewhat satisfied, (3) satisfied and (4) very satisfied. Questionnaire items 22 - 37 had a four point response, with a not applicable category. The scale was (0) not applicable, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree (4) strongly agree. Space was provided for additional comments after each section. The open-ended questions enabled up to three responses and each response space had a corresponding number. This method assisted in the organization of responses and theme analysis of data from open-ended questions.

The research instrument was pilot-tested with 2 students and revised to incorporate feedback. Respondents were informed that the questionnaire should take 20 - 30 minutes to complete.

The interview schedule was developed to guide interviews with administrative staff and instructor/tutors. This schedule was based on questions from Section 3: General Comments of the questionnaire and research questions relevant to program development. The instructor and administrator interview schedule was pilot-tested with a non-participant prior to usage.

Data Analysis

Each questionnaire was coded with a two digit identification number. Individual questions were coded for computer analysis. The analysis of data was organized by sub-questions and the Stake Evaluation model. The following section indicates the data source, method of analysis and the data presentation required for each sub-question. The data were analyzed using the Statistics Program for the Social Sciences (SPSSX). Descriptive statistics were generated for all questionnaire items. Output included frequencies reported in percentiles and measures of central tendency. Cross tabulations were conducted using the Chi-square test of significance to measure the association between variables. Statistical significance was set at the $p<.05$.

Comments derived from each major section of the questionnaire were coded by themes. These themes were identified by their congruence to question stems in each section. Responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed by the most common emerging themes, quantified and reported as frequencies. Similarly, results from interviews are reported as common themes and compared to student responses, where applicable.

Document Analysis

The analysis of pertinent documents contributed to antecedent information. The criteria for document selection was based on the extent information contained would aid in the identification of factors that influenced the development of the print-based distance courses. Course documents were reviewed before the development of a research instrument. Analysis included the review of the following documents:

1. Training Needs of Activity Workers in Saskatchewan (Dill, 1989);
2. The Role and Function of Recreation Staff in Long Term Care in Saskatchewan (MacPherson Consulting, 1990);
3. Special Needs Recreation Independent Study Pilot Course One and Course/Workshop evaluations (Nachtegaele, 1990); and
4. Special Needs Recreation Independent Study Program Planning Manual (Nachtegaele, 1990).

Research Sub-questions Data Sources and Presentation

Antecedent Information

The initial antecedent question addressed factors that influenced the development of the current model utilized for the delivery of distance education courses. Sub-question 2 traces the development and instructional design process of the independent study courses. Information for analysis was obtained from staff interviews and pertinent course documents. These documents have been identified under the section titled document analysis. Sub-question 3 focused on the personal characteristics and backgrounds of the students participating in courses. This information was collected from the questionnaire. Tables include the presentation of personal, employment and education characteristics. Separate tables report the number of hours students spent on a course each week and how they first became aware of the courses. The fourth sub-question examines reasons for student participation in the distance education courses and data were obtained from questionnaire item number 10. The results of sub-question 4 are exhibited in table format representing the primary and secondary reasons for participation only. Cross-tabulations were calculated for reasons for participation by work setting, age category, work experience and education. The Chi-square test of statistical significance was utilized. Results present the analysis of the relationship between work experience and two different reasons for participation which were significant at p.<.05.

Transaction Information

The second set of research questions relate to transaction information. The first sub-question examined the organization of the administrative structure in sustaining the delivery of distance education courses. The second question addressed staff roles and responsibilities within the delivery system. Faculty and staff interviews were primary data sources for these two questions. The third question identified the areas of difficulty students experienced while enrolled in an independent study course. Results were obtained from questionnaire item number 12 (see Appendix B). The final two transaction sub-questions pertained to current resources utilized by students and additional support services that would be beneficial. This information was also derived from the interviews conducted with faculty and staff.

Outcome Information

The third group of research questions relate to outcome information. The sub-questions in this section addressed the extent to which content of course(s) contributed to the learning needs of the students; the degree to which students were satisfied with resources and support services; satisfaction with contact with the instructor/tutor; and the quality of instructional materials. In addition, outcome information included the extent to which students intend to continue participating in distance education courses and whether or not they would recommend a course to others. These data are presented in tabular format and report frequency in percentiles.

The scale for questionnaire items 14-21 was (0) not applicable, (1) dissatisfied, (2) somewhat satisfied, (3) satisfied and (4) very satisfied. The response choices on this scale are not equally balanced, therefore data results for items 14-21 are presented in the original four point scale. Questionnaire items 22-37 also utilized a four point response, with a not applicable category. The scale was (0) not applicable, (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree (4) strongly agree. Data results for items 22-37 were collapsed into a two point scale, strongly disagree/disagree and agree/strongly agree.

The final source of outcome information were responses to open-ended questions. The major strengths, weaknesses and changes or additions were analyzed by emerging themes. These themes are quantified and presented in table format. Administration and instructors were also asked to identify their perceptions of major strengths, weaknesses and areas requiring change. This information was obtained from structured interview questions. These data were summarized by themes and compared to student responses.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the results of data gathered from documents, questionnaires, and interviews. The results are structured by the Stake (1967) evaluation model and research sub-questions as an outline.

Response Rate and Experience with Courses

The study questionnaire distribution and response rate is presented in Table 1. Seventy-one percent of the 82 questionnaires were returned after one reminder letter. Prior to the reminder letter, 39% of the questionnaires had been received.

Table 2 reports the sequence of courses completed by respondents. It shows that of the 58 respondents, 95% had completed course one and 57% had finished course two. Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated they completed course three, while course four was finished by 24% of the respondents at the time of the study.

Course completion rates reflect the course development sequence and the number of course offerings since the initial pilot course in March 1990. As a prerequisite for the remaining three courses, course one had been offered as a pilot course and delivered twice since 1990. However, three respondents (5%) indicated they did not complete the independent study format of course one. Course two had been delivered twice since 1991, while course three and four had each been offered once at the time of the study.

Table 1

Questionnaire Distribution and Response Rate

Distributed N	Response N	Response Rate
82	58	71%

Table 2

Courses Completed By Respondents

Course #[1]	N	Percent
(1) Foundations of Special Needs Recreation	55	95
(2) Leisure Services for Persons with Disabilities	33	57
(3) Leisure Services with Older Adults	24	41
(4) Therapeutic Recreation Program Design & Administration	14	24

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[1] Multiple selections permitted

Data Related to The Problem Statement

The study was guided by the achievement of four objectives. Objectives included: to describe the origin of the special needs recreation independent study courses; to describe the course development process; and to describe the perceived initial outcomes of the distance education courses. The Stake (1967) Evaluation model guided the study and distinguished antecedent, transaction and outcome information.

Antecedent Information

Sub-question 1

What factors influenced the development of the current model utilized for the delivery of distance education courses?

Early in 1989, the Office of the Dean, Health Sciences and Community Services, Kelsey Campus, SIAST, surveyed administrators and staff of 300 Saskatchewan health care institutions. Kelsey Campus was interested in determining the need and demand for a training program aimed at Activity Workers who are currently employed or would seek employment in hospitals, long term care facilities or group homes (Dill, 1989, p. 1). The summary report indicated 63% (N = 150) of the administrators felt that training for Activity workers would be a good idea and was needed to improve the quality of service (p. 2). Of the 279 Activity staff who responded, 87% reported they would benefit from a Training program for Activity Workers (p. 8). The proposed training program was to be based on selected parts of the curriculum of three programs at SIAST, Kelsey Campus. The three programs included: the Home Care Special Care Aide Certificate, Personal Development Worker Diploma, and the Recreation and Leisure Diploma Program (formally the Recreation Technology Program).

The proposed method of delivery was a combination approach aimed at staff without formal education in Recreation. Survey highlights indicated support for both self-directed learning modules and workshops as the main modes of delivery. Credit educational opportunities during the academic year were the preferred course type.

However, in early 1990 no further action was taken to continue the proposed collaborative training program. The collaborative initiative was abandoned for three reasons. First, the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program had made significant efforts to develop the first semester of the Special Needs Recreation curriculum into independent study format. Two factors contributed to this instructional design project. The first factor were the results of the Training Needs Survey. The second factor was the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program's desire to deliver course one in an independent study format to students who were accepted into the second year of the diploma program from a one year certificate program in La Ronge. These students were deficient credits in Special Needs Recreation course one and two. These two courses were not part of the one-year program curriculum.

There had been an increased emphasis on recreation with older adults and long term care; therefore, the second reason stemmed from requests from program graduates for continuing education in the Special Needs Recreation area (Hildebaugh, 1992).

The third and most important factor was the lack of support from senior program stakeholders. The Recreation and Leisure Advisory Committee and the Saskatoon Therapeutic Recreation Association indicated that the educational standards within the field would be lowered if there was a one-year training program for Activity staff. A training program that may decrease the employment opportunities for graduates of the two-year Recreation and Leisure Diploma was not supported (Hildebaugh, 1992). However, the recreation field did recognize the need to assess the roles and educational standards of recreation staff in health care settings. As a result, a research study was proposed by the Saskatoon Therapeutic Recreation

Association and several other stakeholder organizations to assess the function of recreation staff employed in health care environments.

A joint research project was conducted in the fall of 1990 to assess the role and function of activity staff employed by long term care settings in Saskatchewan. The project team had representation from the Saskatchewan Recreation Society, Regina and Saskatoon Therapeutic Recreation Societies, University of Regina, Saskatchewan Activities Association and Saskatchewan Health. The research was completed by MacPherson Consulting Limited. Recreation personnel provided responses to questions related to education preparation. The following quotation supported the Activity Worker Needs survey (Dill, 1989) and validated the need to expand education opportunities for recreation/activity staff in the province. The summary states,

> Approximately 42% of recreation workers have a high school diploma or less than grade 12 education. Less than 30% of respondents indicated that they had formal education in recreation from a university or technical institute. Only 32% believed that their educational background prepared them for their work, while 41% indicated that their education partially prepared them for their jobs. All of those with a formal education in recreation believed that their educational background either prepared or partially prepared them for their job. (MacPherson Consulting, 1990, p. 3.13)

Other documents that contributed antecedent information included a special needs independent study interest questionnaire and the course one pilot evaluation. In the spring of 1990, evaluations were completed for the course one independent study pilot project and workshop. Six individuals participated and at the end of the course indicated satisfaction with the following course elements: readable and useful course manual, suitable amount of reading and number of assignments, and helpful written feedback from instructor. Areas requiring improvement included: quality of print and reproduced articles, and amount of time required to complete assignments. Pilot course participants reported satisfaction with the On-Campus workshop.

The objectives of the workshop were: to clarify course expectations, to review course organization, and to engage in group activities and discussions related to learning objectives in the affective domain.

An interest questionnaire was completed by 33 course one participants at the On-Campus workshop in the fall of 1990. The questionnaire asked participants to indicate the extent to which they were interested in enrolling in additional credit courses in Special Needs Recreation. On the average, 94% of respondents indicated an interest in enrolling in the three additional special needs courses from the Recreation and Leisure Diploma. Participants were also asked to indicate their reason for enrolling in course one. Multiple selections indicated 70% had enrolled in the course for self development, for course credit or because the content was applicable to their job (Nachtegaele, 1990).

Summary

1. Information received from both activity staff and administrators in health care settings indicated a need/desire for formal education opportunities. They felt courses/programs should be delivered in a format that could allow individuals to remain in their own communities.

2. Many recreation staff in long-term care settings had no formal training in recreation and felt their current education level only partially prepared them for their work.

3. Course workshop evaluations indicated satisfaction with the independent study format utilized for course one pilot.

4. If courses were available, respondents to the Interest Questionnaire reported a desire to enroll in independent study courses in the future.

Sub-question 2

What was the instructional design process/strategy utilized for the development and delivery of the correspondence courses?

Specific factors contributed to the design and delivery of print-based independent study courses in special needs recreation. The document analysis contributed information explaining the initial design format. In addition, the staff and instructors were asked to share their views on the instructional design process.

The first contributing factor was the results of training needs survey (Dill, 1989) which indicated strong support for both self-directed learning modules and workshops as the main mode of course delivery.

The second factor, cited in a pertinent course document, stated that the course design was based on an independent study model utilized by the Gerontology Certificate Program (1988), Mount Royal College, Calgary, Alberta (Nachtegaele, 1990). The Program Planning Manual further stated that course format was founded on the units or modules in the Special Needs Recreation curriculum in the Recreation and Leisure Diploma. The Program Planning Manual summarized that the special needs recreation course content applied to the educational needs of recreation staff working in health care environments (Nachtegaele, 1990). During staff and faculty interviews, one interviewee stated that "There is a need to maintain the integrity of courses, in relation to the program" and that the program's role was to "Ascertain a demand and try to find a mechanism to meet the demand. It seemed that the correspondence course for credit offered the best alternative." The interviewee further comments, "Although there was a great deal of program effort initially, the approach was very ad hoc as a clear plan was not evident."

The third contributing factor was the increased involvement of the Extension and Development Division and the availability of funding for course development. In the fall of 1990 development funds became available through the Extension and Development Division of Kelsey Campus. The process of course revision and design evolved from an individual program project to a campus initiative. The Community Services consultant in the Extension Division coordinated the instructional design process and managed the administrative functions of course development and delivery. Writers who had knowledge and experience in the Special Needs Recreation field were hired on contract to revise course one and three and to develop courses two and four into an independent study format. A Recreation and Leisure staff member served as the content specialist and edited course revisions and draft documents. The program staff member, the Extension consultant and the external writers worked as a team in the design and delivery of the special needs independent study courses (Heise, 1992).

Fourth, there were a number of conditions and roles within the internal campus environment that influenced the design and system of course delivery. These conditions included: courses would follow a semester system similar to on-campus students; course production and distribution and student registration were the responsibility of the Extension and Development Division; there was no limit to student enrollment, although a minimum number were required to offer the course; there would continue to be an on-campus orientation and workshop with course one; one contract instructor/tutor would facilitate each course; students could call the instructor at designated times during the week; written assignments and final examination would be submitted and returned by the mail service. These conditions and roles concur with the elements of a traditional correspondence distance education program (Nachtegaele, 1990).

In summary, one interviewee felt that the process and model had evolved; however, initial efforts were "Hit and miss as there was not 100% confidence that it was the best that we could do." Contract staff were constrained to research and write within a short time line. One interviewee stated "The only thing that has carried this process has been the commitment of individuals." One interviewee concluded "There is an expectation for content specialists to have the skills of instructional designers and there are no consultant staff to review the materials, make recommendations or establish design guidelines." Two of the four writers/instructors interviewed stated that the team approach to instructional design had been effective. It enabled access to content expertise and resources and ensured the consistency in course design and format.

Summary

1. The independent study courses were initially developed by a content specialist and based on the special needs recreation curriculum. The process evolved with expanded involvement and funding from the Extension and Development Division. The coordinated efforts employed a team approach to instructional design and delivery.

2. Certain conditions within the internal environment set limits on the design and delivery of the courses. The delivery system reflected elements of a traditional correspondence program.

3. Although progress has been made in the quality of course design and delivery, the first efforts were ad hoc and lacked a set development plan.

Sub-question 3

What are the personal characteristics and backgrounds of the students participating in courses?

Data for sub-question 3 were obtained from section 1 of the questionnaire. Students were asked to respond to questions seeking personal, employment, and education information. Further, they were asked several questions related to aspects of their experience with the independent study course(s). Table 3 displays the personal characteristics of the 58 respondents. It is noteworthy that 86% of students were over the age of 30, with individuals over 40 representing 46% of that total. Ninety-five percent of the respondents were female and only 5% male; however, similar gender differences are noted in the entire student population. When combined with communities under 1,000 people, 65% of participants reported residing in a village or town with a population of 5,000 or fewer. This percentage is slightly higher than the SIAST Study (1991), which indicated that 44% of the students resided in villages, hamlets or on farms. According to Dunleavey, (1989) (cited in Saskatchewan Education, 1991) high representation from rural areas has implications for the availability of local learning resources or support services.

Employment characteristics of respondents are displayed in Table 4. A total of 71% of respondents were employed in long term care settings, while only 5% reported working in a community setting. Analysis of employment status indicates that more than 50% of participants were employed full-time, while 7% of the students reported they were not currently employed. With respect to the amount of work experience individuals have in therapeutic recreation, results show that work experience was evenly distributed and ranged between 21% of respondents having no experience to 28% possessing more than 5 years of experience.

Table 3

Personal Characteristics

Characteristic	N	%
(1) Age Category		
Under 25	3	5.2
25-29	5	8.6
30-39	23	39.7
over 40	27	46.6
Total	58	100.0
(2) Gender		
Female	55	94.8
Male	3	5.2
Total	58	100.0
(3) Community Size		
Under 1,000	21	36.2
1,000-5,000	17	29.3
6,000-15,000	2	3.4
Over 15,000	18	31.0
Total	58	100.0

The data in Table 5 show characteristics related to education. Students were asked to indicate their highest level of education and identify the completion of other post-secondary programs. Grade twelve or the equivalency (GED) was the highest level of education reported by 48% of respondents. The remaining 50% had completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.

The second section of Table 5 presents other post-secondary or vocational education respondents have had. Thirty-three percent of respondents had completed the Home Care/Special Care Aide program. The data presented in Table 5 show that 10% had completed the Recreation and Leisure Diploma and likely were enrolled for continuing education reasons. Results presented in Table 5 suggest that a wide range of academic experience is a characteristic of program respondents.

Table 4

Employment Characteristics

Characteristic	N	%
(1) Employment Setting		
Long Term Care	41	70.7
Rehabilitation or Acute	5	8.6
Other	5	8.6
Not Employed	4	6.9
Community Setting	3	5.2
Total	58	100.0
(2) Employment Status		
Full -time (over 35 hours a week)	31	53.4
Part-time (less than 35 hours a week)	21	36.2
Not employed	4	6.9
Casual Employment	2	3.4
Total	58	100.0
(3) Work Experience in Therapeutic Recreation		
More than 5 years	16	27.6
3 - 5 years	14	24.1
1 - 3 years	13	22.4
no experience	12	20.7
less than 1 year	2	3.4
Total	57	100.0

Table 5

Education

Characteristic	N	%
(1) Highest Level of Education		
Grade 12	18	31.0
Post-secondary Diploma	14	24.1
Post-secondary Certificate	12	20.7
GED	10	17.2
Degree	3	5.2
Total	57	100.0
(2) Other Post-Secondary Education		
Home Care/Special Care Aide	19	32.8
Other	7	12.0
Recreation Technology Diploma	6	10.3
Clerical	4	6.8
Personal Development Worker Diploma	3	5.2
Registered Nursing Assistant	3	5.2
Registered Psych. Nurse	2	3.4
Men's Hairstyling	2	3.4
	46	79.1

Table 6

How Respondents First Heard About Courses

How respondents first heard of course	N	%
Brochure	26	44.8
Word of mouth	11	19.0
Supervisor	5	8.6
Conference	4	6.9
Sask. Assoc. of Special Care Homes	3	5.2
Local Community College	3	5.2
Counsellor	2	3.4
Phoned Kelsey	2	3.4
Recreation and Leisure Program	2	3.4
Total	58	100.0

Students were asked to indicate how they first heard about the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses. Data in Table 6 show that 45% of the respondents were made aware of the courses from a brochure. This brochure had been distributed by Kelsey Extension and Development Division to all health care facilities in the province of Saskatchewan. In addition, 19% of respondents reported that they heard about the courses by word of mouth, likely an associate or colleague from a similar work setting.

In previous pilot course module evaluations students were asked to track the number of hours they spent on the independent study course each week. Results indicated that the hours spent varied with each module or unit; however, when averaged, students spent 10.5 hours weekly on course activities (Nachtegaele, 1990). Data in Table 7 show that 45% of respondents spent 6-10 hours on the course each week, while 29% had spent 3-5 hours.

Table 7

Time Spent on Course

Number of hours a week spent on course	N	%
6-10	26	44.8
3-5	17	29.3
fewer than 3	8	13.8
10-12	4	6.9
more than 12	3	5.2
Total	58	100.0

Sub-question 4

What are the reasons for participation in distance education courses?

Students were asked, in Part A of the questionnaire, to rate six reasons for participation. Respondents were asked to circle those reasons which were primary, those which were partly important, or not important to their participation. If respondents felt that a reason was not applicable they could circle zero. Table 8 displays the total and percentage of the responses that were important or partly important reasons for participation.

With respect to the most important reasons for participation, findings in Table 8 indicate that "personal development" was the main reason for participation reported by 40 students, while an additional 13 students reported this reason as partially important. "Gaining credit towards professional designation" was reported as either the primary reason or a partially important reason for participation for 37 respondents. Similarly, 37 students indicated their main reason for participating in courses was to "qualify for a new job". "Seeking a job advancement" was an important reason for participation reported by 36 students.

Table 8

Reasons for Participation

Reason[1]	Primarily		Partly important	
	N	%	N	%
Personal Development	40	60.9	13	22.4
Advance in job	28	48.3	8	13.8
Credits towards professional designation	26	44.8	11	19.0
Qualify for new job	25	43.1	12	20.7
Start Rec. & Leisure Diploma	20	34.5	12	20.7

Table 9 and Table 10 present cross tabulations of the amount of respondent work experience with reasons for participation that were significant at $p < .05$.

Personal development as a reason for enrollment is broken down by years of work experience. Table 9 notes that as years of experience increase, personal development becomes a more salient reason for participation. Forty percent of individuals with more than 5 years indicated personal development as their primary reason for participating. Personal development was reported as a primary reason by 12.5% and partially important for 54% of persons with less than a year of work experience.

Table 10 reports that qualifying for a new job in therapeutic recreation was a primary reason for enrollment for individuals with less than one year of work experience (52%). This reason was also stated as primary or partially important by individuals in the other work experience categories. When Table 9 and 10 are compared, data show that students with less experience are primarily seeking qualifications required to advance in the field while individuals with more work experience are taking courses mainly for personal development reasons.

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[1] Multiple selections permitted

Table 9

Work Experience by Personal Development as Reason for Participation

Work Experience[1]	None/< 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	> 5 years
	%	%	%	%
Reason Personal Development				
Primarily (N=40)	12.5	22.5	25.0	40.0
Partly Important (N=13)	53.9	23.1	23.1	0

---

[1] Significant at $p < .05$

Table 10

Work Experience by Qualify for New Job as Reason for Participation

Work Experience[1]	None/< 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	> 5 years
	%	%	%	%
Reason Qualify for new job in Therapeutic Recreation				
Primarily (N=25)	52.0	12.0	16.0	20.0
Partly Important (N=12)	0	41.7	25.0	33.3

Transaction Information

The second set of data analyzed relates to transaction information. The primary data source for this information were staff and instructor interviews. However, data for sub-question 3 were obtained from the responses to questionnaire item number 12. A total of the five staff and instructors were asked to comment on the administrative structure organization and the awareness of roles and responsibilities with respect the distance education courses. There was a high degree of similarity in response to these two questions. Therefore, major themes account for interview responses to both questions. In responses to sub-question 4 and 5, interviewees were asked to identify current distance education resources and additional support services. Current and future support services are reported in tabular format by frequency of response.

---

[1] Significant at $p < .05$

Table 10

Work Experience by Qualify for New Job as Reason for Participation

Work Experience[1]	None/< 1 year	1-3 years	3-5 years	> 5 years
	%	%	%	%
Reason Qualify for new job in Therapeutic Recreation				
Primarily (N=25)	52.0	12.0	16.0	20.0
Partly Important (N=12)	0	41.7	25.0	33.3

Transaction Information

The second set of data analyzed relates to transaction information. The primary data source for this information were staff and instructor interviews. However, data for sub-question 3 were obtained from the responses to questionnaire item number 12. A total of the five staff and instructors were asked to comment on the administrative structure organization and the awareness of roles and responsibilities with respect the distance education courses. There was a high degree of similarity in response to these two questions. Therefore, major themes account for interview responses to both questions. In responses to sub-question 4 and 5, interviewees were asked to identify current distance education resources and additional support services. Current and future support services are reported in tabular format by frequency of response.

---

[1] Significant at $p < .05$

Sub-question 1

To what extent is the administrative structure organized to sustain the delivery of print-based distance education?

Sub-question 2

To what extent are administrative and academic staff aware of their roles and responsibilities with respect to the distance learners and courses?

Responses to sub-question 1 and 2 were analyzed and the following general themes emerged. Comments were classified as pertaining to administrative delivery structure or roles and responsibility.

Structure

1. Involvement in distance education exceeds current resources and work load expectations of individual units.
2. Difficult to track part-time distance students.
3. Distance students unsure of who to contact about administrative issues.
4. Mailing system is slow and there are problems receiving and returning assignments.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Organization as a whole has to be behind distance education and support initiatives with appropriate allocation of resources.
2. Internal units, such as the library and registrar, need to clarify their role with respect to distance learners and courses.
3. Roles of the Extension and Development Division and the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program have evolved and been clarified over time.
4. Instructors/tutors require a list of expectations and responsibilities with respect to the distance learners and courses. Examples included: time

lines for returning assignments, responsibilities picking up and returning assignments, and initiating and returning calls to students.

Sub-question 3

To what degree have students experienced difficulty while taking an independent study course?

Table 11

Difficulty Encountered While Taking Course

Difficulty[1]	N	%
1. Academic Stress	24	41.4
2. Dependents	22	37.9
3. Lack of time & balancing work, family & course	20	34.4
3. Personal relationships	13	22.4
4. Study space at home	7	12.1
5. Lack of interaction	3	5.2
6. Materials difficult to read or understand	2	3.4
7. Other -- fear of failure	3	5.2

Multiple responses to question number 12 are reported in Table 11. Data show responses to 7 items related to areas in which students experienced difficulty while taking an independent study course. The area of difficulty that caused students the most trouble during a course was "academic stress" (N = 24). Twenty-two respondents indicated they experienced difficulty as a result of dependents living at home.

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[1] Multiple selections permitted

Lack of time and balancing responsibilities associated with family, work and the course were grouped together and were cited as a difficulty for 20 respondents. Lack of interaction, difficulty of materials and other difficulties received the least responses (N = 3, N = 2 and N = 3 respectively).

Sub-question 4

Within the current model, what learner support services are utilized?

Sub-question 5

Within the current model, what additional support services would learners find beneficial?

The data for Table 12 were obtained from the five interviewees. They were asked to identify the resources or support services currently in place for distance learners and to recommend additional support services. The most common resources available to students were the course manual and contact with the instructor (see Table 12). Interviewees suggested that learners would benefit from increased access to library resources from Kelsey campus or inter-library loan. Academic counselling was identified as a beneficial support service by 2 interviewees.

The following quotation illustrates the need for quality resources.

> I think all courses should have a textbook, even if it only covers several areas, it could still be a resource for them. The text may be their only resource text without access to a library. Access to resources through home library is poor, no access to journals and inter-library took a long time, it is inadequate for rural Sask. I think any resources we want them to have should be provided. We don't want to put students in remote areas at a disadvantage because they don't have the resources.

Table 12

Resources and Support Services

Current Resources / Supports	N	Additional Resources/Supports	N
Course Resource Manual	4	Library resources (through Kelsey or inter-library loans)	3
Instructor/Tutor	3	Academic counselling	2
Local resources (library, newspaper)	2	Textbook for all courses	1
Existing work (supervisor)	1	Instructor contact	1
Textbook	1	Personal support	1
Course 1 On-Campus workshop	1	Career counselling	1

Outcome Information

The third set of sub-questions analyzed outcome information. The sub-questions in this section addressed the degree the content of courses contributed to the learning needs of the students and the degree to which students were satisfied with resources, support services, and contact with the instructor/tutor. Specific attention in this section was given to assessing the quality of instructional materials. Outcome information also included the extent to which students intend to continue participating in distance education courses and whether they would recommend a course to others. Data are presented in tabular format and quantify frequency of response.

The final source of outcome information were comments in response to open-ended questions. Students and staff were both asked to identify three major strengths and weaknesses of the independent study courses. Further, they were to identify one change or addition they would make to the courses. These comments were analyzed for general themes. Discussion compares student and staff responses where applicable.

Sub-question 1

To what degree has course content been applicable to the learning needs of students?

Questionnaire item number 29 asked students to strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree to the statement, "course content is applicable to my learning needs" (see Appendix C). Table 13 shows that of the 57 responses, 24% disagreed or strongly disagreed, 59% agreed and 16% strongly agreed with the statement. In summary, the majority of students (75%) indicated that course content applied to their learning needs while 24% of respondents disagreed with this statement.

Table 13

Course Content Applicable to Learning Needs

Strongly Disagree-Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
N	%	N	%	N	%
13	24	34	59	9	16
				Total N = 57	

Sub-question 2

To what degree are students satisfied with resources and support services?

Section 2 of the evaluation instrument asked students to rate their degree of satisfaction with resources and support services. The data is presented based on the original four point scale. Categories included; dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied and very satisfied with resources and support services. Of the five items in this section, the total percent of respondents satisfied and very satisfied was greatest for "assistance received from administrative staff", the "student guide", and the "orientation information about On-Campus workshop" (76%, 72% and 66% respectively). Forty percent of students were dissatisfied with "library resources available in their home community and 29% were only somewhat satisfied with library resources available from Kelsey Campus. Noteworthy is the low response received for the item "library resources available from Kelsey Campus" (N = 32) and 36% of the total number of respondents rated this item as not applicable. The response to this item indicates that students did not expect access to Kelsey library resources and were not required to seek references external to those provided with each course.

Table 14

Satisfaction With Resources and Services

Section 2:	N	D(%)	SS(%)	S(%)	VS (%)
Question Number					
14. Orientation information about On-campus workshop (Course One only)	47	3	12	43	22
15. Library resources available in home community	48	40	12	21	10
16. Library resources available from Kelsey Campus	32	3	29	19	10
17. Assistance from administrative staff (Kelsey Extension Division)	55	3	16	52	24
18. Student guide included with course 1-4	57	9	17	53	19

Student comments regarding resources and services are reported by theme in Table 15. Twenty-six comments were analyzed. Of the 26 student comments, 8 were with respect to limited access to resources. Four students commented that they had not been able to attend the On-Campus workshop, while an additional 4 comments related to the helpfulness of resources. Several students comments were directed at the difficulty of the course content. Table 15 displays an example of student comments from this section.

Table 15

Satisfaction with Resources and Services -- Analysis of Emerging Themes

(N = 26)

THEMES	N	COMMENTS
Limited access to resources	8	"The resources are poor where I live. There is no access for me to the library in Saskatoon. I am apprehensive to telephone for assistance."
Resources helpful	4	"Kelsey student help services were excellent."
Missed orientation workshop	4	"I missed the orientation, as we were on holidays at the time."
Course content difficult	3	"Course set-up for full-time students...to us many areas being studied is completely new information."
Ensure manual clarity and quality	3	"At times the student manual was somewhat confusing as to what specifically was wanted but it was always nice to know we could contact the instructor for clarification."
Workshop too much for one day and expensive	2	"The orientation workshop is expensive and could be omitted."
Limited access to Kelsey library	2	"Independent study students are not allowed to obtain library cards at Kelsey."

Sub-question 3

To what degree are students satisfied with contact with course instructors (tutors)?

Three questionnaire items asked students to rate their level of satisfaction with instructor and peer contact. The data is presented based on the original four point scale. Categories include; dissatisfied, somewhat satisfied, satisfied and very satisfied with resources and support services. Data reported in Table 16 show that 86% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their "ability to contact the instructor," while 83% indicated that they received "useful assistance from the instructor." Twenty-four percent of the 40 responses to question 21 were dissatisfied with the "amount of support and contact with fellow students". Similarly, 24% of respondents were only somewhat satisfied with peer support. However, the total response for this item was low, with 29% of respondents indicating that contact with fellow students was not applicable to their individual circumstance.

Table 16

Satisfaction With Instructor and Student Contact

Section 2:		N	D(%)	SS(%)	S(%)	VS(%)
Question Number						
19.	Ability to contact instructor	57	3	10	43	43
20.	Assistance received from instructors	55	2	10	45	38
21.	Amount of support and contact with fellow students	40	24	24	14	7

Nineteen students commented on contact with instructor and peers. The themes and example comments are presented in Table 17. Eight student comments related to the limited opportunity for peer contact and support during courses. Difficulty contacting the instructor was a comment made by 5 respondents. Less common themes included the need to increase peer contact and interaction and the quality assistance received from the instructor.

Table 17

Satisfaction with Instructor and Peer Contact -- Analysis of Emerging Themes

(N = 19)

THEMES	N	EXAMPLE OF COMMENTS
Limited opportunity for peer contact and support	8	"I did miss the sharing and support from other students. I phoned another student occasionally, but this is too expensive."
Difficulty contacting instructor	5	"Instructors that are only available once or twice a week is insufficient."
Increase peer contact and interaction	3	"It is far easier to learn when one has contact of some sort with other students and the instructor (workshops, teleconferences) so ideas can be exchanged."
Quality assistance received from instructor	3	"Contact was excellent and most comments were helpful...."

Sub-question 4

To what extent are students satisfied with the instructional materials?

Section 3 of the questionnaire asked students to either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with statements on aspects of the Special Needs Recreation course instructional materials and learning activities. The data in Table 18 represent a collapsed scale, reporting the percentage of individuals who disagree or agreed with the 9 items related to instructional materials. Ninety percent of the respondents agreed that "feedback from instructor is clear and meaningful"; "course evaluation is appropriate"; and that a "variety of learning activities were included in the course." The majority of students also agreed that "assignments contributed to attaining course objectives" (85%); "module learning objectives are made clear" (81%); and "course goals are made clear" (81%).

Table 18

Level of Satisfaction With Course Quality

Section 3:		N	SD/D (%)	SA/A (%)
22.	On-campus workshop contributed to course objectives (Course one only)	43	12	62
23.	Course Manual(s) are easy to follow	53	22	76
24.	Reference Articles are useful	58	22	78
25.	Text(s) are useful in completing course work	52	12	78
26.	Course goals are made clear	57	17	81
27.	Module learning objectives are made clear	57	17	81
28.	Learning activities are adequate attain module objectives	54	16	78
29.	Course content is applicable to learning needs	57	24	74
30.	A variety of learning activities are included in the course(s).	57	9	90
31.	Assignments contributed to attaining course objectives	57	14	84
32.	Clear directions are provided for assignments	56	31	66
33.	Feedback received from instructor is clear and meaningful	56	7	90
34.	Course evaluation is appropriate	56	7	90
35.	Learning activities provided the necessary foundation knowledge to complete modules assignments	55	16	79

Table 19 displays the results of the theme analysis of 22 comments derived from Section 3 -- "Quality of instructional materials." The most common comment that emerged was "crediting courses towards a certificate" (N = 6). Four students indicated that "course content was not applicable to learning needs." The less common themes, along with examples of respondent comments, are also included in the Table 19.

Table 19

Quality of Instructional Materials -- Analysis of Emerging Themes

(N = 22)

THEME	N	EXAMPLE OF COMMENTS
Courses credited toward certificate	5	"As it stands these four courses certificates mean nothing in change form Activity Worker I to II."
Course content not applicable to learning needs	4	"I would like to see material which would provide ideas of how to and what to do with our seniors - most material in course did not help me in the work area."
Consistent course design	3	"Course 1 was easy to follow, course 2 was difficult to follow."
Enjoyed of independent study	3	"I am interested in independent study - for some learning is better than none at all."
Assignment clarity and expectations	3	"I found some of the modules and assignments a bit unclear in their expectations."
Improve clarity of course goals	2	"I made contact with the instructor before registering -- what she told me about the course and what it really was were two different things."
Lack of prerequisite academic skills	2	"Assignments are applicable to getting an English degree. Evaluation are redundant and mostly a lesson in literacy skills."
On-campus workshop	2	"I feel support workshops are very important, especially for rural students who do not have the resources Saskatoon students do."

Sub-question 5

Would students recommend the Special Needs independent study courses to others?

Table 20 presents the results of student responses to questionnaire item number 36. The question asked students to respond to the statement, "I would recommend the Special Needs Recreation courses to others." Results presented in Table 20 suggest that 83% of the participants would recommend courses to others, while 14% would likely not recommend the courses to others.

Noteworthy are those items with a high percentage of disagreement. Table 20 reports four items with 20% or more of the respondents disagreeing with statements related to the quality of course instructional materials. A minority of students indicated they disagreed with the following statements: "clear directions are provided for assignments (31%), "course content is applicable to my learning needs" (24%), "course manual was easy to follow" (22%) and "reference articles are useful" (24%).

Table 20

Recommend Courses

Section 3:	N	Disagree(%)	Agree(%)
Question			
36. I would recommend the Special Needs independent study courses to others	56	14	83

Sub-question 6

To what extent do students intend to continue participating in distance education courses?

The extent to which respondents intend to continue to participate in independent study courses is reported in Table 21. Data show that 69% of students would participate in other print-based independent study courses and courses supported with campus workshops. However, 22% of the 53 students responding to question 37 disagreed with the statement, indicating that they would not likely enroll in other Recreation and Leisure courses in an independent study format.

Table 21

Continue Participation in Other Courses

Section 3: Scale 1-4	N	% Disagree	% Agree
Question			
37. I am interested in taking other Recreation and Leisure Diploma courses in an independent study format (Print-Based Only)	53	22	69
38. I am interested in taking other Recreation and Leisure Diploma Courses in an independent study format (With Support from Campus Workshops)	50	17	69

Sub-question 7

What do stakeholders (students, administrative staff and instructor/tutors) perceive the major strengths and weaknesses of the independent study courses to be?

This section reports student comments to open-ended questions and staff interview responses analyzed as major themes. Strengths, weaknesses, changes or additions and general comments were contributed by both students and staff/instructors. Student responses were obtained from the final section of the instrument (see Appendix C). The questionnaire also provided space for additional comments. Forty-three student comments were categorized as pertaining to course strengths, weaknesses or changes/additions. Several student comments are presented as quotations and included in the discussion. These comments provide insight into the students' perceptions and their experiences as distance learners.

Student comments of the strengths of the special needs recreation independent study courses are reported in Table 22. Students and staff were asked to identify three strengths. Fifty-four students identified one or more strength and a total of 134 comments were analyzed for emerging themes.

Several comments related to the fundamental qualities of independent study. These qualities include the flexibility and the convenience of independent study. Eighteen students commented that a major strength was "being able to remain in home community to take courses." The importance of this strength is captured in the following quotes.

> I appreciate the opportunity to further my education and still work full time and remain at home with family.

> I am very happy being able to take a home study course while in my own home. I am a single parent with three children and I

> work full time. I cannot give up my job to go to school because of finances and my children need a supportive environment. If I were to move to school their lives would be disrupted.

Similarly, "remaining employed" was also very important to learners and indicated as a major strength by 16 individuals. The third strength related to independence and ability to work at their own pace. This strength is an important quality of independent study courses. The fourth strength, noted by 10 respondents, related to "assignments and the time lines" of the independent study courses.

"Course design" and "applicable course content" were both cited as a strength by 13 respondents. The comment of one student captures the strength of course design and flexibility.

> It has been a benefit having three of us at the same Special Care Home, taking the same course. Ideas, problems etc. are shared. Support of each other has been invaluable. Broadens one's scope within the Activity Dept. of the Special Care Home. I highly recommend the courses.

Twelve student comments related to "instructor contact was beneficial" and presented it as a major strength. Nine students felt the "challenge of learning" and the "development of self discipline" were qualities of the independent study courses and this strength was summarized effectively by a respondent who completed two courses.

> I enjoyed them both very much and learned of my successes, as well as my failures or mistakes. I gained new and updated knowledge from both courses.

A chance to increase one's education was cited as important by 8 students. Several students commented on this opportunity.

> Thank you for giving me the opportunity to take these courses. I feel it's only with continued education can one reach their full potential.

> All in all I enjoyed the course and it helped me further my education in a field I thoroughly enjoy. Helping people enjoy life has always been important to me. This course has helped me improve their lives and my own.

Table 22

Strengths – Themes Emerging from Questionnaire

(N = 134)

STRENGTHS	N
Flexibility and convenience – remain in home community	18
Flexibility and convenience -- remain employed	16
Independence and ability to work at own pace	16
Course design	13
Content applicable	13
Contact with Instructors	12
Assignments -- time line flexibility	10
Challenge to learn and develop self discipline skills	9
Chance to increase education	8

Content -- interesting	8
Text books	6
In-expensive	3
Resource materials	2

Several staff responses were similar to student responses. Flexibility (N = 3) and the ability to reach learners in rural communities (N = 2) were mentioned as assets by both groups. Other salient qualities of the independent study courses which paralleled student responses included: increased opportunity for education; contact with students; course design and course content.

Table 23 reports the results of a theme analysis of 115 comments of the weaknesses of the special needs independent study courses as identified by 52 students. Each student was asked to identify up to two weaknesses. The two most frequently cited weaknesses reported were "limited interaction and communication with fellow students" (N = 13) and "lack of clarity and relevancy of select learning activities and assignments" (N = 13). One respondent explained this weakness and stated,

> Perhaps learning activities which are so time consuming to do could be marked and counted towards final mark.

"Access to resources and reference material" was identified as a limitation by eleven participants and especially a problem for rural students. "Inconsistency in course lay out and design" was also reported as a common weakness (N = 10) and primarily related to the inconsistencies between course one and course two. Eight responses were noted for the following three themes: complex content and reading material; cost of courses and courses are not recognized. "Lack of recognition of courses" was a common theme and was summarized by one student who stated,

> I wish the program would be further developed so that there would be a certificate at the end of it, such as the Special Care Aide program.

"Lack of interaction and opportunity for the exchange of ideas" was a concern identified by 6 students. This limitation may be related to the lack of opportunity to interact and communicate with peers.

Seven students stated there was "inadequate instructor feedback" and four participants felt that "feedback was limited." Taken together, limited contact and feedback from instructors was a salient issue and highlighted by a respondent in the following quotation.

> Independent study students should receive their marked exams back. It would be helpful to have more feedback on exams before handing them back.

Additional rank ordered weaknesses as perceived by course participants are also included in the table. Similar weaknesses reported by staff included: limited interaction with peers; slow return of assignments; and lack of recognition for courses (N = 1, N = 2, N = 1, respectively). Limitations of the mailing system for delivery and feedback was cited as a weakness by two interviewees. Other singular weaknesses reported by staff included: courses are not learner centred; difficult to keep resources current; and rigid time lines for course delivery (i.e., semester system).

Table 23

Weaknesses -- Themes Emerging from Questionnaire

(N = 115)

WEAKNESSES	N
Lack of clarity and relevancy in learning activities and assignments	13
Limited interaction and communication with peers	13
Limited access to resources and reference materials	11
Inconsistent course lay out and design	10
Cost of Course	8
Complexity of content and readings	8
Lack of recognition of courses	8
Not enough contact with instructor	7
Not practical enough for target group	7
Poor quality photocopying	6
Lack of interaction and opportunities for idea exchange	6
Reliance on self motivation	5
Limited instructor feedback	4
Slow assignment return rate	4
Conflicting responsibilities	3
Costs associated with course (i.e., telephone calls to instructor)	2

Sub-question 8

What changes or additions would stakeholders make to improve the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses?

The open-ended comments section in the final section of the instrument asked students to identify one change or addition which would improve the independent study courses. A similar question was posed to the staff interviewed. Table 24 reports the analysis of major themes from a total of 46 student suggestions. These comments were classified and organized into twelve fundamental changes or additions. The most common suggestion was to "give courses recognition or a certificate separate from the Recreation and Leisure Diploma" (N = 8). The following quotations capture the intent of these suggestions.

> There should be a goal set for this course, only so students can work towards them, [sic] Diploma, degree, wages expected.

> I would hope that once all four courses have been successfully completed, that there would be some sort of recognition by both SRS and the applicable unions. As it stands now, an Activity 1 position is open to the staff with the most seniority, regardless of education and experience.

Seven people proposed that an On-Campus workshop should be a part of each course. One student provided rational in the following statement.

> I think every course should have a workshop as in Course 1, gave us a better idea of what is expected with each course assignment and learning activity.

"Clearly defining the expectations of activities" and "increasing the practicality of content" were each cited by five respondents as an important change or addition. The need to clarify expectations is inherent in the following statements.

> The course has to be made more straight forward. I find I spend allot of time reading material that doesn't really apply to what I'm supposed to know ... never really sure I was on the right track.

> I found it very interesting and fairly informative but not always relevant to my job.

Ensuring "consistency in course design," "improving student-instructor interaction," and "exploring alternative delivery formats" were important suggestions noted by four respondents. Additional suggestions identified by two or three student are also included in the table.

Common recommendations posed by staff included: consistency in design; give recognition for courses or a certificate; increase practicality of content and activities and make time lines flexible.

Table 24

Changes or Additions - Themes Emerging from Questionnaire

(N = 46)

SUGGESTED CHANGES OR ADDITIONS	N
Give certification or recognition separate from Recreation and Leisure program	8
Incorporate On-campus workshop for each course	7

Clearly define expectations of learning activities and assignments	5
Make course content and activities more practical (job-oriented)	5
Improve communication between instructor and student	4
Explore alternative delivery methods	4
Ensure consistency in course lay out and design	4
Provide a form or review or study guide for exam	3
More assignment variety	2
Increase number of courses available in independent study format	2
Increase time required to complete assignments	2

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Study

This research study was conducted to provide information to: a) describe the factors that contributed to the development of distance education courses; b) describe the instructional design process of the print-based courses; c) describe the demographic characteristics of the students who have participated in courses; and d) identify the initial outcomes of the correspondence mode of course delivery as perceived by the primary stakeholders. The Stake (1967) Evaluation model provided the framework for designing and guiding the research study.

The methodology utilized document analysis, questionnaire results and interviews to gather information on program development, and perceived initial outcomes. Stakeholders participating in the study included students, administrative staff and instructors.

The evaluation and analysis of the independent study model utilized for the Recreation and Leisure diploma courses, Kelsey Campus, was undertaken to contribute to future course revisions, course development and delivery decisions.

Using the framework of the Stake (1967) Evaluation model, this chapter summarizes antecedent, transaction and outcome information. Antecedent information is intended to describe the factors that lead to course development. Transaction information describes the dynamic factors related to program implementation. Outcome information provide the source for judging satisfaction and the effectiveness of the courses.

Discussion is based on a comparison of the elements of quality in distance education correspondence courses and the results of this study. A structure describing the elements of quality in distance education was outlined in the literature by Saskatchewan Education in a 1990 Discussion Paper, "Distance Education in Saskatchewan". The elements of quality cited in the distance education literature include; measures of success (Coldeway, 1986); course design (Keegan, 1986; Kaufman, 1989); and student support services (Kelly, 1991; Kirkup & von Plummer, 1990; McInnis-Rankin & Brindley, 1986; Shklanka, 1990; Thompson,1989).

Summary of Antecedent Information

Antecedent information was gathered and analyzed to identify circumstances surrounding the development of the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses at Kelsey Campus, to determine the reasons for student participation and to gain insight into the personal characteristics and backgrounds of participants.

The first antecedent sub-question addressed the factors that contributed to the development of the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses. Related documents were analyzed and the key factors summarized. A 1989 Needs Assessment indicated that recreation staff employed in health care environments would benefit from formal educational opportunities. The study respondents had a preference for a self-study format for course delivery. MacPherson Consulting (1990) completed a study that suggested that a majority of recreation staff in long term care settings had no formal training in recreation and felt their current level of education only partially prepared them for their work. Although both studies clearly indicated a need for formalized educational opportunities for Activity staff in health care settings, the development of a certificate or short course was not supported by the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program or the Therapeutic Recreation profession. The Recreation and Leisure program could not support a program that may jeopardize job opportunities for graduates of their two-year program. The therapeutic recreation profession did not want to see the educational standards in the field reduced to a certificate level.

A compromised solution resulted in the development of the special needs recreation curriculum into an independent study format. The courses would be credited towards the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program. The program implemented a pilot course in the spring of 1990. Pilot results supported the independent study format. In the fall of 1990 participants enrolled in the first offering of course one indicated a desire to participate in other independent study courses in the future.

The second antecedent sub-question examined the instructional design process. The staff and instructors involved in the development and delivery of the independent study courses were interviewed. Relevant documents also contributed important information about the instructional design process. Summarized results from interviews suggested that initial design efforts lacked a set development plan, although significant improvements have been made since the initial pilot project. The coordinated development efforts of the Extension and Development Division and the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program resulted in the expansion of course offerings and a team approach to instructional design. The course format and delivery mode reflected a traditional print-based distance education course.

The third sub-question sought information about student backgrounds and personal characteristics. Questionnaire results suggested that study respondents were mainly female, over the age of 30 and resided in rural areas. They reported working full or part time, with the majority employed in long term care settings for more than one year. Course participants reported previous experience with post-secondary education in fields other than Recreation and Leisure. Respondents were made aware of the independent study courses through a brochure distributed to health care facilities. Students indicated that they spent an average of 5 to 10 hours weekly on course activities. Results suggest that similar characteristics exist between participants who had participated in the special needs recreation independent study courses at the time of this study and the profile of the typical distance learner (Helm, 1989; SIAST, 1990).

The identification of the reasons for student participation in the independent study courses was the fourth and final question seeking antecedent information. Students reported their primary reason for participation as "personal development." A cross-tabulation of "personal development" and "years of experience" indicated that this reason was especially salient for respondents with more than 5 years of experience and significant at $p<.05$ Cross-tabulation of the amount of work experience by "qualify for a new job" as a reason for participation was significant at $p<.05$. Qualifying for a new job was the primary reason for participation cited by 52% of individuals with less than a year of work experience.

Summary of Transaction Information

Responses to interview questions provided the information about the administrative structure and extent to which staff and instructors are aware of their roles and responsibilities. In addition, transaction information included the identification of resources utilized during the independent study courses and the resources that students would find beneficial. Questionnaire results identified the areas in which students experienced difficulty while enrolled in an independent study course.

Interview data revealed important issues related to the administrative structure. One interview cited that involvement in distance education exceeds current resources and work load expectations of individual units within Kelsey Campus. Second, students who are not enrolled in a full-time program become difficult to track, especially if they are part-time distance students. A third issue related to the administrative structure stated that it was not formally organized to deal with the issues distance students may face. The final issue cited that a delivery structure relying on the mail system is slow and there are problems receiving and returning student assignments.

Transaction information revealed issues related to staff roles and responsibilities. Interviewees believed that roles and responsibilities have evolved as the courses developed. The second issue identified in staff interviews suggested that the organization as a whole has to be behind distance education and support initiatives with appropriate allocation of resources. Further, the internal units of the campus, such as the library and registrar, need to clarify their role with respect to distance learners and courses. The interviewees felt that the roles of the Extension and Development division and the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program have matured and been clarified over time. Finally, one interviewee suggested that instructors/tutors be provided with a list of expectations and their responsibilities with respect to the distance learners and courses.

The final portion of transaction information included the difficulties students encountered while taking a distance education course. Results of questionnaire item number 12 show that "academic stress" was the most frequently cited area of difficulty for respondents. The second most commonly cited area of difficulty was "having dependents at home." This problem can be appreciated since the majority of respondents were in their 30's and were likely balancing family and work responsibilities with the course requirements.

Sub-questions four and five examined resources utilized by students enrolled in courses and identified additional resources that may be useful to distance education students. The most common resources identified by staff interviewed were the course resource manual and the instructor/tutor. Several interviewees indicated that distance education students would benefit from access to library resources and academic counselling. Currently, the later resources are not provided to distance education students through Kelsey Campus.

Summary of Outcome Information

Outcome information was gathered to assess the extent the course(s) contributed to the learning needs of participants and the degree of satisfaction with specific aspects of the course design and delivery.

Although the majority of students indicated that the courses applied to their learning needs, 24% stated that courses were not applicable to their current learning needs. Students reported general satisfaction with the resources and services provided with the independent study courses, but were less satisfied with library resources available in their home community and the limited access to resources through Kelsey Campus.

There was a high degree of satisfaction with instructor contact, although several individuals commented that they experienced difficulty contacting the instructor during the designated times. Although comments suggested students missed the sharing and support from other students, 29% of respondents felt that this interaction and support were not applicable to independent study.

Questionnaire results indicated strong agreement to statements related to course quality. The majority of students indicated that course goals and objectives were made clear and that assignments contributed to the attainment of course objectives. Twenty percent or more students were less satisfied with certain elements of the courses. Emerging themes from student comments supported their ratings. The clarity of assignments, the application of course content to their learning needs and the usefulness of the course manual and reference material were questionnaire statements to which 20% or more students either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The most common student comment related to course quality was that "courses should be credited toward a certificate". This comment was cited by 5 students.

Student responses indicated that the majority would recommend the independent study courses to others, while only 69% intended to continue participating in distance education courses themselves.

Major strengths of the independent study courses were the flexibility and convenience of remaining in one's home community and to remain employed while taking a course. Staff interviewed supported this strength and further merited the courses for the ability to reach learners in rural areas. Additional key strengths of this delivery format included the ability to work at their own pace and the independence the course allowed.

The lack of clarity and relevancy in learning activities and assignments was noted as a major weakness of the independent study courses (N = 13). Similarly, thirteen students comments related to the limited interaction and communication with peers. The third most common weakness cited was the limited access to resources and reference materials. Lack of recognition of courses was also cited as a weakness by 8 respondents. Staff noted the following weaknesses: limited interaction with peers, slow return of assignments, and lack of recognition of courses.

The most important change or addition students would make to the courses was "to give courses recognition or a certificate separate from the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program" (N = 8). Seven students suggested that an "On-Campus workshop be incorporated to each course." Individual staff recommendations included the need for consistency in course design, giving recognition for courses or a certificate, increase the practicality of content and assignments and to ensure flexibility in the time lines of courses.

Discussion

The judgement matrix of the Stake (1967) Evaluation model is comprised of standards and judgement components. The elements of quality in correspondence distance education, as described in the literature, will provide the standards to base discussion about program efficacy. The three key areas in the literature are: measures of success, course design, and support services.

The three groups of measures of success of a distance education program are described by Coldeway (1986). The first group of indicators focus on the student, the second on institutional factors and the third reflect elements of innovation in education.

Student indicators suggest that student satisfaction with the course(s) or program is a measure of its success. In this study respondents reported satisfaction with resources and services provided, and instructor contact. Ratings of instructional materials conclude that students were generally satisfied with the course quality, but recommended the clarification of expectations for learning activities and assignments. In addition, many respondents indicated their desire to receive recognition for the completion of courses, preferably in the form of a certificate.

The second set of measures of success focus on institutional elements. Elements related to this study include: providing alternative methods and times of delivery and the availability of other services. The Special Needs Recreation independent study courses provided an alternative delivery method, previously not accessible to students outside of the Recreation and Leisure Diploma program. These distance education courses provided an option for learners who could not quit their job or leave their community to attend classes full-time. This inherent flexibility was identified by student and staff as a major strength of the courses. The availability of other services is a limitation of the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses. The only supports made available to students during their period of study are the course resource manual and telephone contact with the instructor. This telephone interaction is initiated by the students as difficulties arise.

Findings indicate that 42% of students experienced academic stress while taking an independent study course. However, they have no access to any form of counselling, other than the course instructor. Given these findings, and the fact that study respondents had a wide range of academic skills and experience, future students may benefit from access to academic counselling.

The third set of measures of success outlined by Coldeway (1986) focus on innovation in education. The two elements addressed by the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses are: reaching previously disadvantaged groups and giving people an opportunity to enroll who otherwise would not have had the opportunity. The profile of student characteristics from this study indicates that participants reside predominantly in rural areas. Independent study courses provide these learners with access to courses previously only available to student studying full-time, face-to-face. Based on the reasons for participation, the experience with these courses have provided learners the opportunity to grow personally and professionally.

The second aspect of program quality is course design. Seaborne and Zuckernick (1986) reported that the emphasis and support for course development is a key indicator of an institution's commitment to distance education. Based on comments from administrative staff and instructors, Kelsey Campus must provide ongoing commitment, in terms of time and resources and development expertise, to ensure the delivery of quality distance education courses.

The course design literature outlines design elements that should be evident in quality print-based distance education materials. Keegan suggests that materials include carefully structured content, self-testing questions, instructional objectives and inserted questions. The Special Needs Recreation Independent study course materials include course goals and objectives, structured content and inserted questions to attain learning objectives. Study findings suggest that the clarity of course goals, assignments and learning activities could be improved.

Student support services is the third key area important to quality in distance education. The literature indicates that students benefit from the provision of either human support or from physical resources during a distance education course. McInnis-Rankin and Brindley (1986) concluded that the increasing use of technology will be the trend in the delivery of support services in distance education. The use of technology is not evident in the delivery of student support services associated with the independent study courses.

Currently, the Special Needs Recreation independent study support services and resources are limited to the course manual and contact with the instructor. Although the literature has emphasized the importance of library support services for students studying at a distance, students enrolled in the Special Needs Recreation courses have no access to library resources from Kelsey Campus and local library services are cited as inadequate.

Contact with and support from peers as a type of support service varies between men and women according to Kirkup and von Plummer (1990). They recommend that a network of support is more important among female distance learners.

The comparison of the study findings and the literature on program quality in distance education provide the basis for the following research and program development recommendations.

Recommendations

Recommendations for future research and program development are presented below.

Research Recommendations

1. SIAST and Kelsey Campus and the therapeutic recreation profession should re-evaluate the support for a Special Needs Recreation Certificate for recreation workers employed in health care settings in Saskatchewan.

2. A comparison study of the students enrolled in Special Needs Recreation face-to-face instruction and independent study courses should be conducted to determine differences in outcomes.

3. Based on the needs and characteristics of distance learners in Saskatchewan, SIAST and Kelsey Campus should conduct research to determine the need for the provision of student support services.

4. Additional research which assesses specific elements of quality in print-based distance education and other distance education delivery methods is required.

Program Development Recommendations

The Recreation and Leisure Diploma program and Kelsey Campus Extension and Development Division have continued to revise and develop courses during the time-frame of this study. After this study was initiated the Extension Division revised the design format of Course One. This change was based on student feedback on course evaluations in 1991. Although this revision was important to ensure course design consistency, this study has indicated several other areas requiring improvement. The following program development recommendations are based on antecedent, transaction and outcome information presented in this study and a comparison of the program quality elements.

1. It is recommended that SIAST and Kelsey Campus expand the team approach to course design to include consultation with an instructional design specialist. This will enhance course quality and consistency in design.

2. It is recommended that contract instructors and tutors be provided with written guidelines outlining expectations and responsibilities with respect to the distance learner and course procedures. Examples included: time lines for returning assignments, responsibilities for picking up and returning assignments, and initiating and returning calls to students.

3. It is recommended that SIAST and Kelsey Campus consider the provision of student support services, such as access to Kelsey Library, inter-library loans and academic and career counselling, as part of their long term planning for distance education.

4. It is recommended that methods to encourage peer contact and support be incorporated into course design. An example includes distributing student names and telephone numbers after participation in the course One On-Campus workshop.

5. It is recommended that courses be systematically evaluated and revised to clarify course goals, to improve the clarity of directions and expectations of assignments and other learning activities, to ensure careful structuring of content so that course manuals are easy to follow and to review currency of reference material.

6. It is recommended that course materials should incorporate self-testing questions, exercises which emphasis the development of thinking skills (i.e., problem solving exercises) and a study guide for reviewing and preparing for the final examination.

7. It is recommended that the opportunities for interaction/communication between the instructor and student be improved, either through use of telephone tutorials or other forms of interactive media.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

LETTER OF PERMISSION

SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE
OF APPLIED SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY

Kelsey Campus
Idylwyld & 33rd Street
P.O. Box 1520
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5
Fax: (306) 933-8403
Phone: (306) 933-6350
Toll Free: 1-800-567-3263

November 27, 1991

Maureen Konrad
7724 Jasper Avenue
EDMONTON, Alta.
T5H 3R8

Dear Maureen:

Your request to initiate a formative evaluation of the independent study courses in the Recreation and Leisure Diploma Program was taken forward to the November 20, 1991 meeting of the SIAST Management Council for approval.

It was agreed that you would be granted permission to conduct research towards your Master's degree in Education with the understanding that student anonymity be ensured and research results be made available to SIAST - Kelsey Campus.

I look forward to receiving a copy of your research results and wish you luck in completing your Master's degree.

Sincerely,

Modest Kowal
Principal

/jlm
cc: B. Heise, Consultant - Extension & Development Division
M. Hidlebaugh, Program Head - Recreation & Leisure Diploma
C.S. Butts, Dean - Health, Sciences & Community Services

Kelsey Campus
Saskatoon

Palliser Campus
Moose Jaw

Wascana Campus
Regina

Woodland Campus
Prince Albert

APPENDIX B:

INSTRUMENT COVER LETTER

May 12, 1992

Full Name
Address

Dear"First Name":

RE: RECREATION AND LEISURE DIPLOMA -- EVALUATION OF THE SPECIAL NEEDS RECREATION INDEPENDENT STUDY COURSES

For the last 3 years the Recreation and Leisure diploma program, along with Kelsey Extension and Development division, have developed and delivered four print-based independent study courses. These courses have been accessed by a variety of individuals employed in recreation in long term care and community settings across Saskatchewan. A program evaluation is being initiated in an effort to make improvements to these courses and address future delivery needs.

I am currently undertaking graduate research as part of the requirements for a masters degree at the University of Alberta. My research study is a comprehensive program evaluation of the special needs recreation independent study courses. The data gathered will be used in my thesis.

As a student who has participated in one or more independent study courses, you have a very important contribution to make to the evaluation. The enclosed questionnaire provides you with an opportunity to formally provide feedback about the independent study courses. The questionnaire should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary and all responses will remain completely anonymous. A reminder letter will be sent to you if the questionnaire is not received by May 21, 1992.

Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated and I appreciate the donation of your time in completing the questionnaire.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Maureen Konrad

APPENDIX C:

INSTRUMENT

RECREATION AND LEISURE DIPLOMA PROGRAM INDEPENDENT STUDY EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of this survey is to gather information which will provide a basis for the evaluation of the Recreation and Leisure Diploma Program, Special Needs Recreation independent study courses. Your feedback is important, as the results of this study will be used to make course revisions and program decisions. Please take the time to complete the questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided. Refrain from putting your name anywhere on the questionnaire, as all information gathered is confidential.

For Office Use Only

____
Respondent ID #

SECTION I - GENERAL INFORMATION

For each question, please indicate your response by placing a check mark in the appropriate blank.

1. Check the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses you have completed. (Check all which apply). 3-6

___ (1) Foundations of Special Needs Recreation.
___ (2) Recreation and Leisure Services for Persons with Disabilities.
___ (3) Leisure Services with Older Adults.
___ (4) Therapeutic Recreation Program Design and Administration.

2. What type of work setting are you currently employed? (Check one only) 7

___ (1) Long Term Care (Nursing Home, or Lodge).
___ (2) Rehabilitation or Acute Treatment Facility.
___ (3) Community Recreation Setting.
___ (4) Currently not employed.
___ (5) Other, specify________________________________.

3. What is the size of the community in which you live? 8

___ (1) Under 1,000
___ (2) 1,000 to 5,000
___ (3) 6,000 to 15,000
___ (4) over 15,000

4. What is your employment status? 9

___ (1) Full-time (Over 35 hours a week)
___ (2) Part-time (Less than 35 hours a week)
___ (3) Currently not employed
___ (4) Casual employment

5. Your gender? 10

___ (1) female ___(2) male

6. Your age category? 11

___ (1) Under 25
___ (2) 25 - 29
___ (3) 30 - 39
___ (4) over 40

7. Indicate the highest level of education you have completed? 12

___ (1) Grade 12
___ (2) GED
___ (3) Post-secondary certificate
___ (4) Post-secondary diploma
___ (5) University degree(please specify)______________________.

8. Previous certificates, or diploma(s): **(Check all that apply).** 13-17

___ (1) Home Care/Special Care Aide Certificate
___ (2) Personal Development Worker Certificate
___ (3) Registered Nursing Assistant
___ (4) Recreation Technology or Recreation and Leisure Diploma
___ (5) Other (please specify)______________________________.

9. How much work experience do you have in the therapeutic recreation field? 18

___ (1) no previous experience
___ (2) less than 1 year
___ (3) 1 -3 years
___ (4) 3 - 5 years
___ (5) more than 5 years

10. What were your reasons for enroling in a special needs recreation independent study course(s). Circle your response after each statement. 19-24

	Not applicable	*primarily*	*partly important*	*Not Important*
(1) To advance in present job	0	1	2	3
(2) For my personal development	0	1	2	3
(3) To qualify for a new job in Therapeutic recreation	0	1	2	3

(4) To obtain credits towards professional designation	0	1	2	3
(5) To start a Recreation and Leisure diploma	0	1	2	3
(6) Other, (specify)________________.	0	1	2	3

11. How did you first hear about the Special Needs Recreation Independent Study courses? **(check one only)** 25

___ (1) Course brochure sent to facility
___ (2) Conference or workshop
___ (3) Colleague or word of mouth
___ (4) Supervisor
___ (5) Other, specify____.

12. **Indicate which areas you encountered difficulty while taking a independent study course. (check all that apply).** 26-30

___ (1) dependents
___ (2) study space at home
___ (3) personal relationships
___ (4) academic stress
___ (5) other,(specify)____.

13. On average, how many hours each week do you spend working on the Special Needs Recreation independent study course(s)? 31

___ (1) less than 3 hours
___ (2) 3-5 hours
___ (3) 6-10 hours
___ (4) 10-12 hours
___ (5) more than 12 hours

SECTION 2 - COURSE INFORMATION

The following statements relate to the resources and services provided during the independent study course(s). Use the scale below and circle the number of your response.

Not applicable (NA)
Dissatisfied (D)
Somewhat satisfied (SS)
Satisfied (S)
Very Satisfied (VS)

A. Satisfaction with resources and services.	**NA**	**D**	**SS**	**S**	**VS**	
14. Orientation information about On-campus workshop (Course One only)	0	1	2	3	4	32
15. Library resources available in home community	0	1	2	3	4	33
16. Library resources available from Kelsey Campus	0	1	2	3	4	34
17. Assistance from administrative staff (Extension)	0	1	2	3	4	35
18. Student guide included with courses 1-4	0	1	2	3	4	36

Comments:

B. Contact with course instructors or peers

	NA	D	SS	S	VS	
19. Ability to contact instructor	0	1	2	3	4	37
20. Assistance received from instructors	0	1	2	3	4	38
21. Amount of contact and support with fellow students.	0	1	2	3	4	39

Comments:____

____

____

SECTION 3 - COURSE QUALITY

A. Instructional and Course materials

The following statements relate to aspects of course materials and learning activities.
Please respond to the following statements stating your level of satisfaction using the scale below.

Not applicable (NA)
Strongly Disagree (SD)
Disagree (D)
Agree (A)
Strongly Agree (SA)

	NA	SD	D	A	SA	
22. On-campus workshop contributed to course objectives (Course one only)	0	1	2	3	4	40
23. Course Manual(s) are easy to follow	0	1	2	3	4	41
24. Reference Articles are useful	0	1	2	3	4	42
25. Text(s) are useful in completing course work	0	1	2	3	4	43

	NA	SD	D	A	SA	
26. Course goals are made clear	0	1	2	3	4	44
27. Module learning objectives are made clear	0	1	2	3	4	45
28. Learning activities are adequate to attain module objectives	0	1	2	3	4	46
29. Course content is applicable to my learning needs	0	1	2	3	4	47
30. A variety of learning activities are included in the course(s).	0	1	2	3	4	48
31. Assignments contributed to attaining course objectives	0	1	2	3	4	49
32. Clear directions are provided for assignments	0	1	2	3	4	50
33. Feedback received from instructor is clear and meaningful	0	1	2	3	4	51
34. Course evaluation is appropriate	0	1	2	3	4	52
35. Learning activities provided the necessary foundation knowledge to complete module assignments	0	1	2	3	4	53
36. I would recommend the Special Needs independent study course(s) to others	0	1	2	3	4	54
37. I am interested in taking other Recreation and Leisure Diploma courses in an independent study format (PRINT-BASED ONLY)	0	1	2	3	4	55
38. I am interested in taking other Recreation and Leisure Diploma courses in an independent study format (WITH SUPPORT FROM CAMPUS WORKSHOPS)	0	1	2	3	4	56

Comments:____

____

____

B. General Comments

1. Please provide up to three strengths of the independent study courses.

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

2. Please provide up to three weaknesses of the independent study courses.

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

3. If you could make one change or addition to improve the independent study courses, what would that be?

(i)

4. Any other comments on any aspect of the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

APPENDIX D:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - SPECIAL NEEDS RECREATION INDEPENDENT STUDY EVALUATION
MAY - 1992

SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. What has been your involvement with the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses?

2. What has been your most positive experience with the Special Needs Recreation independent study courses.

SECTION 2 - COURSE INFORMATION

3. What is the instructional design strategy of the correspondence courses?

4. Within the current model, what learner support services are utilized?

5. Within the current model, what additional support services would learners find beneficial?

6. To what extent is the administrative structure organized to sustain the delivery of print-based distance education?

7. To what extent are the administrative and academic staff aware of their roles and responsibilities with respect to the distance learners?

8. If you could change any aspect of the independent study courses, what would you do?

9. Please identify what you perceive to be two strengths of the independent study courses.

10. Please identify what you perceive to be two weaknesses of the independent study courses.